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## DEBS AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

THE EDITORS

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7

## SOCIALISM—USA AND USSR: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

ALEXANDER LESLIE AND THE EDITORS

*64-page DEBS MEMORIAL ISSUE*

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEETZ

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

In this Debs memorial issue, we are happy to be able to announce that we are joining with the editors of *The National Guardian*, *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, and *The American Socialist* to sponsor a Debs Centennial Meeting to be held at the Fraternal Clubhouse, 110 West 48th Street, New York City, on Monday, November 28, at 8 p.m. The featured speaker of the evening will be the famous author and scholar Dr. W. E. B. DuBois. Other speakers will be Leo Huberman, I. F. Stone, James Aronson of the *Guardian*, Bert Cochran of the *American Socialist*, and Cliff McAvoy, former American Labor Party mayoralty candidate in New York. A contribution of \$1 will be collected, but we have made arrangements to have all MR Associates admitted free on showing their membership cards. There is little doubt in our minds

(continued on inside back cover)

## DEBS AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

Eugene Victor Debs was born a hundred years ago, on November 5, 1855. He was a great American and a great man, incomparably the greatest figure the American socialist movement has yet produced. He hated oppression, he loved truth, he fought for what he believed in with unflinching courage. He set us a magnificent example of which we, as Americans and socialists, can be enormously proud. We stand straighter and hold our heads higher because of him.

This issue of *Monthly Review* is dedicated to Gene Debs. It contains perceptive appraisals of the man and his work. It also contains selected passages from his writings and sayings. And, in the spirit of free discussion which Debs held so dear, it initiates a discussion of a number of questions of vital concern to American socialists.

There is one further tribute we should like to be able to pay to Debs—the tribute of describing and analyzing the successes achieved since his death by the party and the movement to which he devoted the greater part of his adult life. But, alas, that is not possible. All the successes of the Socialist Party were achieved during his lifetime; today it no longer exists as a serious political organization. And the socialist movement as a whole has declined in size and influence to its lowest point in at least a half a century.

Is it legitimate to conclude, as most anti-socialist commentators seem to have done, that American socialism is dying? That Debs will be remembered in the history books of the future as an eccentric reformer and not as the first great leader of the movement which was destined to revolutionize American society?

We think not. Debs' deeply held conviction that the future belongs to socialism seems to us to be much better founded today than it was during his lifetime. He lived to see the Russian Revolution, but the survival of the world's first socialist society was far from assured at the time of his death. Today, one third of the human family is living under the banner of socialism, and there is hardly a country outside the United States in which the socialist movement is not bigger and stronger than it was three decades ago. True, the United States has lagged behind, but this hardly proves that the stream of modern history has passed us completely by. Socialism corresponds to the basic needs and aspirations of human beings under the demographic and technological conditions of the twentieth century, and this is as true of the United States as it is of any other country or

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region of the planet. Sooner or later, these needs and aspirations will make themselves felt, here as elsewhere. And when that time comes, Debs will take his place along with Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and perhaps a handful of others as one of the great transforming figures of American history.

Meanwhile, there is no greater tribute we can pay to Debs than a really serious effort to understand our present situation, for it is only on the basis of a correct understanding that we can hope to rebuild a viable and effective socialist movement.

The task is no easy one. Many convinced socialists have been overcome by a spirit of defeatism and have, for the time being at any rate, withdrawn into a private world of their own. Others, falling into a psychological pattern familiar among believers in times of adversity, cherish utopian hopes that a miracle is about to rescue them. Still others, seeing socialism as a goal too remote to have practical relevance to present behavior, put all their energies into promoting reforms which they know must prove largely illusory within the framework of an acquisitive society. How are we to lift the dead weight of defeatism, dispel the dreams of utopianism, expose the shallowness of day-to-day reformism?

The crux of the matter, it seems to us, is to demonstrate that socialism *is* attainable in the United States, that we do not have to rely on a miracle or a disaster to bring it, and that intelligent activity here and now can hasten its coming and help to solve the problems of transition.

Those who rely on a miracle are the ones who imagine that the American working class has a basically socialist attitude and will soon throw off its present misleaders and march forward to the socialist goal. This is sheer illusion. There was much more socialism in the American working class in Debs' time than there is now, and the trend is still against us.

This is where the reliers on disaster come in. Just let there be another world war or another big depression, they say, and socialism will soon revive in the American working class. *Then* we shall resume our interrupted forward march.

It is far from certain that either war or depression would lead to a revival of socialism in the American working class: reasonable arguments can be made on both sides of the question. But let us waive the point, let us assume that they would. Must we really count on these disasters to put new life into the American socialist movement? And anyway, can we be sure that they will occur?

A new world war is possible, of course, but in an age of atomic stalemate we think it less and less likely. Depressions are not only possible; they are inevitable under capitalism. But we adduced reasons



in last month's Review of the Month for thinking that a *big* one may not be in the cards for as far ahead as it is useful to try to look in matters of this kind. Suppose there is neither a big war nor a big depression. Would that mean the end of the American socialist movement? And if so, can you blame a lot of socialists for succumbing to defeatism—or, what is probably more frequent, deciding that it makes more sense to be a capitalist than a socialist in the United States?

Reliance on disaster, it seems, can itself be disastrous. But what's more important, it isn't necessary.

It is certainly true that up to now socialism has never come to any country except in the wake of disaster—war or civil war or both. But this is changing under our very eyes. Among one third of the people of the world, socialism is now a going concern, and its performance is being watched with sympathy and hope by growing numbers outside the socialist orbit. Every socialist success makes new converts; every improvement in the quality of life in the socialist countries convinces doubters. And these successes and improvements are as certain as the proverbial death and taxes: they spring from the very nature of socialism as a society that consciously plans for the welfare of its members.

To be sure, the influence radiating out from the socialist countries has so far had its greatest impact on the backward countries. This is perfectly natural. For reasons which are still too little recognized or understood,\* socialism came first to backward countries, and its early advances, especially in the fields of production and consumer living standards, were for a long time bound to be advances over the levels achieved by other backward countries.

We are still in this phase. Those who are most impressed by the achievements of socialism are still the backward peoples. But it is also clear that we are beginning to enter a new phase. As far as production is concerned, the USSR is even now high up among the advanced countries, and the command of the Soviet consumer over goods and services is already comparable to that of his counterpart in such countries as Italy and France. In both respects, the Soviet Union shows a sustained rate of advance which none of the capitalist countries can hope to match. Moreover, the quality of life in the socialist world is clearly improving. The old class system with its inherent inequalities and injustices has been abolished,\*\* and along

\* We call attention to our own effort to elucidate these reasons: "The Communist Manifesto After 100 Years," Review of the Month in MR for August 1949 (reprinted in P. M. Swezy, *The Present as History*, pp. 3-29).

\*\* Those who doubt it should read and ponder the extremely interesting article by the British historian E. H. Carr, "Soviet Society: Is There a Bourgeoisie?", which appeared in *The Nation*, October 1, 1955.

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with material success there is coming, slowly but surely, an atmosphere of greater freedom and tolerance.

Looked at in historical perspective, all these developments are as yet in their earliest infancy. If we can avoid the catastrophe of atomic war, it is only a question of time before the socialist countries catch up with and surpass all the capitalist countries, including the most advanced. And along the way, the socialist world is sure to grow by the adherence of new members anxious to share the proven benefits of rational planning for the common good.

What effect will all this have on the United States?

Let us concede that as the most advanced capitalist country we are likely to be the slowest to be impressed by the achievements of socialism, the last to recognize its vast superiority both as a system of production and as the means to the realization of the brotherhood of man. But these are not the kind of developments to which *any* people can remain permanently blind. And they will most assuredly not burst unannounced upon an unsuspecting America. Already our more intelligent heads are beginning to understand, reluctantly and with mixed emotions, that in a peaceful competition of social systems socialism is the predestined winner. And every time a country decides to join the socialist world, we Americans will have a graphic reminder that the competition is on and capitalism is losing out. Sooner or later, we too will see the truth and draw the necessary conclusions.

It was a great American, Lincoln Steffens, who said on his return from Russia in 1919, "I have been over into the future and it works." He was one of the first to see it, just as his country may be the last. But see it he did, and the time will come when his countrymen will be led by the overwhelming evidence of history to agree that he was right.

Is this mere wild speculation? Or facile optimism?

We see no reason to think so. Despite the cynics, history does teach valid lessons, and surely one of the least disputable is that a new and higher civilization has a transforming effect on its environment. In our day and age, the new civilization is socialism and the environment is the whole world. To the skeptics we recommend the following experiment: If you don't accept our thesis, work through to your own solution of the problem of the long-run effects of the development of socialism in the huge area where it is now firmly established. If you really believe in the potentialities of socialism, we venture to think that you will find yourself in much closer agreement with us at the end than at the beginning of the experiment. Of course, those who *don't* believe in the potentialities of socialism, will continue to disagree; to them we can only say, "Wait and see."

How long will all this take? No one knows. No one can know.

It may take many decades. It may happen faster than anyone would now dare to predict. It all depends on how long it takes the American people—and we mean to include all but the special beneficiaries of capitalism—to see and understand the truth. No doubt a decisive factor will be the rates of quantitative growth and qualitative advance in the socialist world; that is why we welcome its successes as our own. But another factor will also play a crucial role; the extent to which, and the skill with which, the American people are taught the truth. And, make no mistake, that means how well we socialists do our job, for the main function of teaching the truth—in the full sense of presenting the facts and drawing all their implications—must inevitably fall on us.

It isn't a simple job, of course. It won't be accomplished overnight—not in 1956 nor even in 1960. But it is a big job and an important one, one worthy of the full efforts and energies of all who want to carry on in the genuinely socialist tradition of Gene Debs.

We shall perhaps be sneeringly told that we are counselling to American socialists a program of all talk and no action. This is nonsense. We are counselling a program of *purposeful* action. Teaching the truth is not a matter of sitting back and shooting off your mouth. It is first and foremost a matter of reaching people, working with them, gaining their confidence, helping them to draw the lessons of their own and others' experience. It means making new converts, new teachers. It means joining existing organizations and sometimes forming new ones. It means activity in trade unions and political campaigns. When the time is ripe, it will mean founding and loyally working for a labor-based political party.

It means all these things, but it also means more—it means the straightforward and steadfast championing of socialist principles.

It is this that the American Left has forgotten in recent years, and it is this that it must re-learn before it can become an effective and ultimately successful political movement. There is no better way to start than by studying the life and works of Eugene Victor Debs.

## THE MAN OF PEACE

We do not doubt President Eisenhower's sincere preference for peace over war. He has seen war close up and knows its horrors well. Personally he is a decent sort, like millions of other Americans with a similar background and beliefs. Moreover, peace has served him well. His fame and popularity, both here at home and to an even greater

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extent abroad, are closely linked to his having acquired a reputation as a man of peace. Commenting on the concern shown all over the world when the news of the President's illness became known, Thomas J. Hamilton of the *New York Times* wrote:

If peoples outside the United States are accurately informed, it was President Eisenhower, rather than Secretary of State Dulles or Vice President Nixon, who was responsible for the decisions to conclude an armistice in Korea, to abstain from intervening in Indochina, and to restore the "leash" on Chiang Kai-shek. Certainly the peoples approved of these actions and gave President Eisenhower the credit. However, it was the leading role played by President Eisenhower at the Geneva heads of government conference that really established his fame abroad. (Review of the Week section, October 2, 1955.)

If we make the perhaps not unreasonable assumption that statesmen and politicians (and even generals) like being famous and popular, we can see that the President has plenty of good reasons, quite apart from personal likes and dislikes, for being a man of peace.

All this is true and important, and we should not lose sight of it in assessing the present situation. But it seems to us that we should be a little more circumspect in drawing conclusions from it than some of our good friends in the American Left have been. "The President's illness is a world calamity," wrote I. F. Stone in his *Weekly* of October 3rd. And Carey McWilliams, editorializing in *The Nation* of October 8th, took much the same line: "On the international front the President's illness could not have come at a more unfortunate time. . . . The new atmosphere—the 'Geneva spirit'—which the President largely created is now in danger of being dissipated. His personal intervention, which has been decisive on key issues, will now be asserted less consistently and effectively. . . . Uncertainty about Mr. Eisenhower's health may well prompt the Russians to adopt a wait-and-see policy."

These cries of alarm, it seems to us, are both premature and exaggerated. We do not deny that individuals can and do play a crucial role in certain special historical situations. It is very difficult to believe, for example, that the Bolshevik Revolution would have taken the course it did in the summer and autumn of 1917 if Lenin had been absent. Or, to take another example, it is quite possible that the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, which certainly marked the turning point of World War II, was almost wholly a personal decision of Hitler. But we see no reason at all to believe either that a situation of this kind exists at the present time, or that Eisenhower is the sort of individual who could play a decisive role if it did exist.

Eisenhower's peace decisions—Korea, Indo-China, Formosa—reflect the judgment of the decisive sections of the United States ruling class that a big war would be a disaster *for them* as well as for every one else. His role at Geneva was motivated by fear in the same circles that a continuation of cold-war intransigence would cost the United States its allies. Naturally, we do not mean to imply that there is some sort of secret Wall Street cabal which gives orders to Eisenhower. There doesn't need to be. He knows what the Big Boys think from intimate personal association, and he agrees with them. It's as simple as that.

Is there any reason to fear that policy decisions would be greatly altered if Eisenhower were altogether out of the picture? The danger does exist, it must be admitted. It is just conceivable that the war party, operating primarily through Nixon and Dulles, might seize the occasion to stage a sort of palace *coup* and act quickly to commit us to a course of disaster. It is conceivable, but unlikely. The war party has been seriously weakened in recent months, and even the hotheads would think twice before embarking on such a desperate and risky course. Slick opportunists like Nixon and Dulles would be more likely to move slowly, trying to build up their forces for a later and more secure conquest of power. Their chances of success, in our judgment, are distinctly poor. The reasons which have so far kept the Big Boys from throwing their support behind the war party will continue to operate in the future, only more so. And without the support of the Big Boys, the war party is not likely to get very far.

One final point needs to be made. If the Big Boys themselves should decide to go in for a more warlike course—and the possibility certainly cannot be ruled out—they would desperately need "a man of peace" to put it across on the American people and on our allies abroad, and it is not clear where they could find a suitable substitute for Ike. Listen to Thomas J. Hamilton thinking aloud on this cheerless prospect (the passage is from the same article quoted above):

The President's supervision will be missed even more if it develops in the second round at Geneva that the Russians have nothing but smiles to contribute. . . .

In such event, would the "cold war" be resumed, and if so on what terms? Presumably, the Russians would avoid the mistake of the Stalir period and would continue to talk politely. These tactics have already helped wear down the determination of Europeans and Americans. It would be necessary to expose their lack of substance, but at the same time not to run the risk of being called a warmonger.

President Eisenhower, because of the respect in which he is held in such neutralist countries as India, is specially qualified

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for such a re-examination of United States policy. There is considerable evidence that such action will have become necessary by mid-November, when the Geneva meeting will probably conclude. We must hope that the President will be strong enough by then to lay down at least general lines of the revised policy that will be needed.

We have our doubts whether those whose views Mr. Hamilton reflects will, on more mature consideration, plump for a "revised policy." But in any case it is just as well to remember that there is more than one way to use a man of peace.

(October 17, 1955)

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*Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage. He has not come; he never will come. I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again.*

—Eugene V. Debs

*As a rule, large capitalists are Republicans and small capitalists are Democrats, but workingmen must remember that they are all capitalists, and that the many small ones, like the fewer large ones, are all politically supporting their class interests, and this is always and everywhere the capitalist class.*

*Whether the means of production—that is to say, the land, mines, factories, machinery, etc.—are owned by a few large Republican capitalists, who organize a trust, or whether they be owned by a lot of small Democratic capitalists, who are opposed to the trust, is all the same to the working class. Let the capitalists, large and small, fight this out among themselves.*

*The working class must get rid of the whole brood of masters and exploiters, and put themselves in possession and control of the means of production, that they may have steady employment without consulting a capitalist employer, large or small, and that they may get the wealth their labor produces, all of it, and enjoy with their families the fruits of their industry in comfortable and happy homes, abundant and wholesome food, proper clothing and all other things necessary to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It is therefore a question not of "reform," the mask of fraud, but of revolution. The capitalist system must be overthrown, class-rule abolished and wage-slavery supplanted by cooperative industry.*

—Eugene V. Debs

## THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DEBS

BY BERT COCHRAN

American socialism, David Karsner once wrote, began in Woodstock jail. What he was referring to was Debs' conversion to socialism while serving a six-month prison sentence at Woodstock, Illinois, in 1895 for violating a court injunction issued in the course of the American Railway Union strike against the Pullman Company. Debs had been an important official of the Brotherhood of Railway Firemen and well known in labor affairs. But the Pullman strike gave him national prominence, and when he came out of jail he was a revered figure. In his campaign for the presidency in 1900, he put socialism on the map.

Eugene V. Debs can unquestionably be considered the spiritual father of the Socialist Party which was formally founded in Indianapolis in 1901, and which stood at the forefront of American radicalism for the next twenty years. There is no question that he was the most popular and effective socialist figure ever to appear in America. No one in his time, or since, has even remotely approached him in his impact on the American people. He struck a spark wherever he went, and was the only American left-wing leader around whom a *personal legend* grew up, in the manner of famed rebels of old. Is he simply to be admired and honored as a colorful personality and America's first great socialist apostle, or is there, beyond that, something in his life and work that can guide those of us who are seeking to recreate American socialism as a mass movement?

Debs has often been compared to Lincoln. John Swinton, a celebrated newspaperman, for a time chief editorial writer of the *New York Times*, heard Debs at Cooper Union in 1894, and was reminded of the speech he had heard in the same hall three decades earlier when Abraham Lincoln came out of the West seeking the presidential nomination. "It seemed to me that both men were imbued with the same spirit. Both seemed to me as men of judgment, reason, earnestness and power. Both seemed to me as men of free, high, genuine and generous manhood. I took to Lincoln in my early life, as I took to Debs a third of a century later."

This comparison was very widely held and disseminated in and out of the socialist movement, and even Debs partially accepted it.

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*Bert Cochran is on the Editorial Board of The American Socialist. This is the fifth in a series on the great American radicals of the past.*

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The truth is that there was a certain similarity between the two men, but it was of a strictly limited and narrowly circumscribed character. Both were very tall and lanky in appearance. They had the informality, displayed the tolerant manner, and exuded the democratic spirit of Middle Westerners of an earlier day. They were both self-taught, and empirical and practical in their approach. And both possessed to a large degree virtues highly admired by the American people: generosity, courage, and independence. They even resembled each other in a more personal way in their attitude of chivalry and courtliness to the point of prudery toward women, coupled with occasional flashes of coarseness where their male associates or boon companions were concerned. They both had great natural eloquence; but here, as we come to the domain of their intellectual and political equipment and outlook, the comparison abruptly breaks off.

Lincoln had far superior literary gifts, and was the possessor of a beautiful, polished style, but he was by no means an electrifying speaker, and his addresses are primarily pieces of written eloquence. Debs, in his earlier years, was often florid and sentimental in expression, and even at his height sometimes rambled, or got lost in sonorous generalities. But he was one of America's most gifted orators. He lifted audiences out of their personal preoccupations; he communicated his earnestness, his conviction, his humor, his love for his fellow man; he fired men and women with a vision of a new brotherhood that was possible, that was coming. Lincoln became a nationally revered figure only after he had been apotheosized. Debs became a cherished leader while under the barrage of disapprobation in high places and the slanders of a hostile press.

It is unnecessary here to attempt a judgment as to the comparative abilities and greatness of the two men. The one rose to the highest office in the land and directed its affairs in the midst of civil war. The other remained for his whole life a leader of a minority movement. But as public figures the two revealed themselves dissimilar in essentials.

As a politician, Lincoln was shrewd and cagey, a compromiser and a diplomat. As a President, he followed a cautious, dilatory policy; he tried to run a revolutionary war with legalistic methods, and was pushed into every one of his far-reaching positions only by overwhelming pressure of events. If Lincoln had been a political leader in a less tempestuous period, he might have emerged as a personality of the Henry Clay variety.

In contrast, Debs' passionate nature made him utterly contemptuous of political trimming, and incapable of practicing it. After serving one term as a Democrat in the Indiana state legislature, he became thoroughly disgusted with the corruption and log-rolling of



## THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DEBS

capitalist politics, and resolved never to seek public office again. He could not see labor bettering its conditions by this path. After throwing himself heart and soul into building the Brotherhood of Railway Firemen into a sizable organization, and being instrumental in starting most of the other rail Brotherhoods, he found each craft undercutting the other to the advantage of the railroad companies. As soon as he determined that solidarity could not be achieved under the old craft setups, he unhesitatingly chucked his union career, turned his back on the Brotherhoods, and set out to organize the railroad workers into an industrial union. When the government moved in to smash the victorious ARU strike against Pullman, and Debs realized that simple unionism was not enough to emancipate the working man, he began to seek for the solution in the same honest and courageous fashion that he had done before. Once convinced that socialism was the answer, he devoted himself to the cause without hesitation or thought of self.

Thus, when we penetrate beneath the surface, the differences between Lincoln and Debs become striking and palpable. Of course they lived in different times and represented different classes and causes. But Debs in 1860 would have been an Abolitionist, whereas Lincoln in 1900 would have been, at the extreme, an Altgeld. In truth, it would be far more accurate to liken Debs to Wendell Phillips, despite the dissimilarities of the two men in personality and background.

In the decline suffered by American radicalism in recent years, Debs' writings are all but forgotten, and on the rare occasion when his name is mentioned nowadays it is always to emphasize that he was a kindly, generous, and lovable man. When, in 1948, Debs' writings and speeches were republished, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. was selected to write the introduction, in which he made Debs out to be a kind of pioneer Rooseveltian New Dealer. Max Eastman had previously sentimentalized Debs as a saintly old man. As Lenin once wrote, during their lifetime great revolutionists are persecuted and slandered. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into "harmless icons." Debs has not escaped this fate.

He was not simply a kindly and lovable man, with a gift for speech-making. Had he been only that, or chiefly that, he probably would have mounted the pulpit, and ministered in a minor way to the small, faithful flock of his congregation. But Debs combined an overwhelming sympathy and sense of comradeship for his fellow man with the burning zeal and uncompromising resolve of the indomitable revolutionist. When a minister visited him in his cell while he was serving time in Atlanta prison for his opposition to World War I, Debs told him he didn't believe Christ was meek and lowly at all,

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but an agitator who went into the Temple with lash and knout and whipped the oppressors of the poor. It was for this they nailed his body to the cross, not because he told men to love one another. "That was a harmless doctrine," Debs said. "But when he touched their profits and denounced them to their own people, he was marked for crucifixion."

Debs not only was a revolutionist; he was completely conscious of what was involved when he chose that path. "Hold Your Nerve" was the significant title of an article he wrote for the *Appeal to Reason* in 1907, in which he talked about the revolutionist's way of life. "Ferdinand Lasalle, the brilliant social revolutionist, once said that the war against capitalism was not a rose water affair. . . . It is rather of the storm and tempest order. . . . All kinds of attacks must be expected, and all kinds of wounds will be inflicted. . . . You will be assailed within and without, spat upon by the very ones that you are doing your best to serve, and at certain crucial moments find yourself isolated, absolutely alone as if to compel surrender, but in those moments, if you have the nerve, you become supreme."

When Debs put on his first Presidential campaign in 1900 he was already forty-five years old. For the next eighteen years, until he was sent to jail for his Canton speech, he went up and down the country spreading the socialist message as no man ever had before, spending the better part of his life on the lecture platform, sleeping in day coaches and cheap hotel rooms, hastily gulping down restaurant meals between appointments. Once he hit his stride, he talked to big audiences everywhere. Thousands traveled miles to hear and see the famed agitator. His 1904, 1908, and 1912 Presidential campaigns pushed the socialist challenge onto the public arena with increasing urgency and effectiveness. The 1908 campaign, with its "Red Special," is still talked about by old-timers. Debs spoke for sixty-five consecutive days from six to ten times a day. A week in advance of his scheduled Hippodrome speech in New York City ten thousand tickets had been sold, and the night of his appearance they were being black-marketed for five dollars apiece in front of the hall. Debs polled almost a million votes in 1912, and many of the newspaper commentators admitted that but for the extraordinary competition of Theodore Roosevelt's "Bull Moose" party the socialist vote might have been doubled.

Eugene Debs preached a militant class-struggle brand of socialism. He was a champion of fighting industrial unionism and, in the initial days of its formation, lent his efforts to building the IWW. As a lecturer and agitator, and for many years as chief editorial writer for the *Appeal to Reason*, he was in the forefront of every important labor battle of that period, whether it was a strike, a free speech con-

test, an organizing campaign, an election, or the defense of a framed labor organizer.

One illustration will convey the flavor of his language, the hard-hitting policy, and the militancy of the tone employed in those stirring days. After the Ludlow massacre of 1914, when the militia raked the tent colony of miners with machine-gun fire, murdering two women and eleven children, Debs stated in the *International Socialist Review*:

The time has come for the United Mine Workers and the Western Federation of Miners to levy a special monthly assessment to create a Gunmen Defense Fund. This fund should be sufficient to provide each member with the latest highpower rifle, the same as used by the corporation gunmen. . . . If a thief or thug attacks you or your wife and threatens to take your life, you have a lawful right to defend yourself and your loved ones, even to the extent of slaying the assailant. . . . Rockefeller's gunmen are simply murderers at large, and you have the same right to kill them when they attack you that you might have to kill the burglar who breaks into your home. . . . It remains to be said that we stand for peace, and that we are unalterably opposed to violence and bloodshed if by any possible means, short of absolute degradation and self-abasement, these can be prevented. We believe in law, the law that applies equally to all and is impartially administered, and we prefer reason infinitely to brute force. But when the law fails, and in fact, becomes the bulwark of crime and oppression, then an appeal to force is not only morally justified, but becomes a patriotic duty.

Debs was the most influential single leader through the two decades when socialism constituted an important movement, and he was generally accepted as its main spokesman. The Socialist Party was divided into right and left wings from its earliest days, and Debs was always associated with the left. Yet, almost from the time of its formation up to America's entrance into World War I, the Socialist Party began drifting to the right, until it was dominated by a middle-class leadership of lawyers, preachers, editors, and lecturers. Under their influence it was steadily being transformed into a mild-reform, office-seeking type of organization. The Milwaukee "sewer socialists" became the symbol, for many, of what the party stood for. At the 1912 convention, just six months before Debs' greatest campaign triumph, Hillquit and Berger and the other party officials crushed the left wing, and soon afterwards drove its leader, Haywood, and thousands of his followers, out of the party. How explain the anomaly that socialism's leading spokesman had so little influence inside his own party?

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Here we come to a peculiar side of Debs' makeup. Some of the very qualities which made him the irresistible personality that he was, conspired to make it impossible for him to assume the burdens of party organization leader. Soon after his conversion to socialism, he got involved in the factionalism and caucus maneuvering which marked the early struggles of the Social Democracy of America (the forerunner of the Socialist Party) and in the subsequent fusion negotiations with the split-off group of the Socialist Labor Party, which finally resulted in the formation of the Socialist Party. Temperamentally, Debs had no stomach for this jockeying and internal squabbling. He felt it was beneath him and would reduce him to petty shysterism. Apparently he made up his mind in those early days to stay out of all these internal conflicts and keep himself free to do his big work. He thereafter went to such extremes that for twenty years he never participated in a party convention, never ran for or held a party position, never attempted to line up members behind his views, and never took part in the left wing's organizational deliberations.

Debs had his own office at Terre Haute, owned his own publishing company (directed by his brother), and pretty much ran his own show. Undoubtedly, he felt that in a party where every state organization had autonomy, and all the important socialist papers and magazines were privately owned and controlled, his speeches, election campaigns, and articles were as important in setting actual socialist policy as any pronouncements made by the National Committee. And up to a point he was probably correct. But this individualistic mode of operating had severe limitations, even in the prewar Socialist Party, as experience was to prove.

The left wing's conflict with the party leadership smoldered for a number of years. By 1909, the revolutionary socialists got a big shot in the arm with the sensational IWW victory at McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. Displaying new confidence as a result of the rising swell of progressivism and radicalism in America, they reasserted themselves against the reformists with growing assurance. From 1910 to 1912, the battle between the two factions raged up and down the party. As in previous years, Debs was associated with the left wing in a general sort of way, but he participated in none of its activities, had no organizational relations with its leaders, and limited himself to occasional pronouncements in the party press. But this proved none too happy an arrangement either for Debs or the other left wingers.

For one thing, the revolutionary socialists were deprived of the considerable support that Debs could have swung behind their faction had he been so disposed. Moreover, by abdicating as a political leader in this matter, he was able to exert little influence in shaping the character of the left wing. And this was a pity, because the revolu-

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tionary elements were then sidetracked by syndicalism and by mistaken notions about "direct action." They could have been straightened out by Debs, who had a better feel of the American labor movement, and a superior understanding of the all-round nature of the political struggle for socialism. For Debs was one of the very few prominent Socialists who consistently steered clear of both opportunist and syndicalist misconceptions. But since he kept himself aloof, the struggles between the two factions developed along the lines of reformism versus a revolutionary socialism perverted by syndicalism.

Debs never bothered to attend the 1912 convention, for which the right wing had sharpened its factional knife to destroy its opponents. But just a short time prior to the convention, he published an article in the *International Socialist Review* entitled "Sound Socialist Tactics." It was a splendid article in many ways, far superior to the thinking of the left-wing leaders. But, in the concrete situation in the party at the time, it was like an announcement that the great Debs was washing his hands of both factions, and in effect therefore made it easier for the right wing, which was the stronger side and the aggressor in 1912, to cut down its rival. The close to a million votes that Debs rolled up that year was no adequate compensation for Haywood's being clubbed out of the party and approximately forty thousand left wingers dropping out in disgust.

The same criticism can be made of Debs in relation to the new left wing that arose in the war period. Its leader, Charles E. Ruthenberg, begged Debs to come to the emergency St. Louis convention in April 1917, and help in the fight, but Debs flatly turned him down. His explanation was a characteristic one. He said that he had stated his views and now it was up to the delegates to make their own decisions. Debs half rationalized his conduct into a theory of skepticism of "leadership," which he vaguely equated with the middle-class leadership of the Socialist Party, and into a belief that in some unspecified way it was up to the rank and file to save the situation. He said in his Canton speech: "I never had much faith in leaders. I am willing to be charged with almost anything, rather than to be charged with being a leader. I am suspicious of leaders, and especially of the intellectual variety. Give me the rank and file every day in the week." Debs had worked in organizations all his life, and he knew that they could not be operated on the basis of pure anarchism. This attitude, however, reveals the fear of giving any officialdom too much power, lest it be misused—a fear that was highly prevalent among radicals in prewar America. This was not just soap-boxing on Debs' part. In 1912 he had written: "I confess to a prejudice against officialism and a dread of bureaucracy. I am a thorough believer in the rank and file, and in ruling from the bottom up instead of being

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ruled from the top down. The natural tendency of officials is to become bosses."

In the light of postwar developments, the fears of the prewar militants cannot be said to have been groundless. But Debs certainly did not have the solution. His proposal for a rotation of officials—a popular Wobbly nostrum—is too puerile to warrant discussion. If the semi-military organization that the Communist movement developed at a later date is not the answer, certainly it cannot be said that the madhouse that was the organizational setup of the prewar Socialist Party was the answer either.

At any rate, with his instinct for the trends among American workers, and for the right approach, Debs might have given the new generation of left wingers some sense of reality about postwar America, and cured them of many of their romantic revolutionary hallucinations. But his responsibility by this time was at a bare minimum, as he was now an old and sick man, and he had been in jail while some of the important party developments were transpiring.

In recent years, Debs has been criticized from a different point of view. William Z. Foster and others have found fault with the great agitator for his dual unionism, his opposition to a labor party, and his underestimation of the Negro question—arguments which Ray Ginger repeats in his excellent biography of Debs, *The Bending Cross*. With the exception of the last point, the criticisms are, I think, not well taken.

Left wingers of various persuasions are pretty much agreed today that it is ineffective for radicals to walk out of the established unions in order to set up ideal and pure unions for the workers, that such a policy leads to the self-isolation of the Left and gives capitalist-minded labor leaders an unchallenged control over the unions. The criticism used to be especially applicable to this country, where for many years strong tendencies existed among radicals to form arbitrarily pure socialistic unions without any reference to the actual trends in the labor movement. Two classic examples of such conduct were DeLeon's Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance of 1895 and the Communist Party's Trade Union Unity League of 1929.

But that does not mean that a suprahistorical law ordained that all developments had to occur within the AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods, which during most of Debs' active life were woefully small and weak. The Western Federation of Miners was organized independently of the AFL and was a very effective union. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers developed outside of the AFL and remained independent for many years. As a matter of fact, the CIO, while originating inside the AFL, launched its crusade for industrial unionism as an independent movement, and in opposition to the AFL.

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It is more than doubtful that Debs can be criticized for having abandoned the Railroad Brotherhoods and launching the American Railway Union in 1893. The organization was not the dream child of some radicals but rather the product of the actual experiences of the railroad workers. It was headed by some of the most prominent rail unionists of that period. And proof of its validity was the fact that in a year's time the ARU had more members than all the Brotherhoods put together. It is true that the railroad corporations, in alliance with the courts and the United States Army, managed to destroy the union after the Pullman strike. But that cannot be considered an argument against its formation, any more than the loss of the steel strike of 1919 is an argument against the calling of the strike and the attempt to unionize the industry at that time. The 1919 strike prepared the way for the next and successful attempt.

The founding of the IWW in 1905 by left-wing socialists is a more debatable proposition. But even this is not the clear-cut mistake that Ginger imagines it to be. The AFL had a membership of less than a million and a half in 1905, and was moreover bound by a gentleman's understanding with the National Civic Federation to confine itself to the thin stratum of skilled crafts, thus in effect abandoning the mass of unskilled workers. It is by no means established that an independent industrial union movement might not have prospered at that time. Where Debs, Haywood, and the other left wingers erred was in their equation of industrial unionism with revolutionary politics, making the IWW into a red revolutionary organization with all the trimmings. The IWW might have had mass appeal as a straightforward movement for modern unionism, but as a cross between a union and a revolutionary party, its appeal was decidedly limited. This was the common mistake of all left wingers of this period, which Debs came partially to realize after a while, especially when the IWW took a turn towards anarcho-syndicalism. He then returned to the position he had promulgated in earlier years. After his break with the IWW, he wrote: "I would encourage industrial independent organization, especially among the millions who have not been organized at all, and I would also encourage the 'boring from within' for all that can be accomplished by the industrial unionists in the craft unions."

The labor party criticism has the appearance of an attempt mistakenly to transplant the conditions and problems of the present to those of Debs' day. From 1901 to World War I, the Socialist Party was the biggest labor political organization on the scene. The isolated attempts of some local unions here and there to form local labor parties represented diversionary movements from the mainstream rather than possibilities of organizing the labor political movement on a



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broader basis. The question would have presented itself as a practical problem to the SP only if Gompers and his associates had decided to organize a labor party. But the national AFL leaders clung obdurately to the old-line parties. In the circumstances, Debs is to be commended rather than criticized for his political course.

On the Negro question, the Socialist Party is open to strong condemnation. The party sucked up the prejudices of middle-class America and was rife with Jim Crow attitudes. Debs fought these chauvinistic manifestations with his customary vigor, but he believed that it all reduced itself to the labor question. He did not understand the responsibility of socialists to champion the specific fight for Negro equality. This was the one important phase of the struggle he ignored.

Of course, Ginger's criticisms, mistaken or otherwise, are predicated on acceptance of Debs as a big political leader. But Debs' right-wing opponents maintained that he was no leader at all. As the party's internal struggles grew fiercer, the officials got the word around that his heart was bigger than his head. Debs was too popular with the rank and file to be openly attacked, but along the grapevine the word was spread that he was just a glorified soap-boxer. When Heywood Broun wrote, "Debs was never the brains of the party," he was voicing the conviction of the official leadership and the general feeling of the Eastern intelligentsia. That Debs was no scholar or original thinker was undeniable. That he had neither the training nor leisure for extensive research or theoretical study was equally true. Without a doubt, there were many on the Rand School staff who had read more books than he, and could deliver more erudite lectures on Marxian economics or philosophy.

But Debs held firm to Marxist *principles* throughout his life as a socialist, which could not be said of the Rand School scholars and theoreticians. Beyond that, he had a profound knowledge of the American labor movement, and an uncanny instinct for what was right. Despite his individualistic habits and his aloofness from inner-party conflicts, he undoubtedly was the national spokesman of American socialism in its halcyon period. His tactical sense was exceptionally keen, his kinship with the American worker was extraordinarily close and sensitive, and he understood better than anybody else the meaning and content of a broad, all-national, political struggle for the minds and hearts of the American people. He was the first to blaze the trail for industrial unionism. He was the first to raise the standard against the prosecutions of William Haywood, Fred Warren, and the McNamara brothers. He crowned his work with the dramatic demonstration against the war, first in his Canton speech, and again in the courtroom. "Big Bill" Haywood was certainly his equal as a revolutionary fighter. But Haywood let himself get detoured into the stag-



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nant backwaters of anarcho-syndicalism, and thereby lost his opportunity to play the role of a national political leader. Debs saw more clearly, and clung to his position through all the difficulties and vicissitudes of the struggle.

The peculiar type of leadership exercised by Debs resulted from an interaction of a number of factors, other than just his personal idiosyncracies and limitations. If the latter alone had been involved, Debs might conceivably have formed a bloc with several others who possessed qualities and abilities that he lacked, and in that way have given the party a more rounded and stable leadership. The Socialist Party, however, from its foundation in 1901 up to the final split in 1919, was never a homogeneous party, but a bloc of two basically antipathetic factions pulling in opposite directions. They lived inside one organization, which, moreover, housed dozens of side-factions, groups, grouplets, cliques, and what-not, each with its own special interpretations and notions of socialism, ranging from Christian utopianism to bizarre forms of ultra-leftist purism. The numerous privately owned papers, all pitching their own special creeds, added to the general confusion and disorganization.

The chaotic situation inside the party was a reflection of the immaturity and inexperience of the working class in the country. Through most of the years of its glory, the SP was riding the crest of the wave of populism and progressivism that was sweeping America (halted only by the war, and then broken by the postwar prosperity). But this progressivism was of a nebulous character, and was composed of many diverse currents. Debs was therefore confronted with the problem of how to keep the revolutionary program and maintain contact with the masses who were not yet revolutionary.

These are the circumstances which conditioned Debs' prewar type of leadership and probably reinforced his special personal traits. This mode of operation is certainly no abstract ideal. But it had superb achievements to its credit, and it was not as simple a matter to improve on it as the left wingers of the 1920s seemed to think. With all of its faults—and it had many—the Debs days are still rightly talked about as the best period of American radicalism.

The movement has passed through many experiences since Debs' time. Many valuable new things have been learned as well as many valuable old things unlearned. This is not the place for a critical examination of Communism, which was the mainstream of American radicalism in the 30s and 40s. It is also vain to recommend Debs' specific traits of personality, which in any case cannot be transmitted or adopted by others at will. And the America of the witch hunt and H-bomb is a considerably changed country from the one Debs knew, and it demands a different kind of organization. But his conception

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of a broad struggle for socialism, undominated by machine politics, opportunism, or bureaucratism, retains its validity. And it can further be avowed that some of Debs' incomparable virtues which captured the American imagination will be sought again in the socialist leaders to come, and that the chords which he struck in the American heart, of human solidarity and the passion for honesty, straightforwardness, and fair play, will have to be struck again if a new emancipatory movement of national proportions is to be called forth.

### GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH DEBS

BY GEORGE WOODARD

I belong to the generation of American socialists who never knew Debs. I first heard about socialism in 1926, the year that Debs died.

For many years, Debs was a vague and shadowy figure to me. I had no doubt that he deserved my respect, but I had no desire to make his further acquaintance.

After World War II, it became glaringly obvious that no one in the American Left had the slightest idea how to talk to Americans.

My thoughts turned more and more to the history of American socialism. I began to think about such former leaders as Gene Debs and Oscar Ameringer, and to wonder what was the secret of their close contact with the American people. About that time, my wife chanced to remember that some years before an old friend had once urged her to read the writings and speeches of Debs. She had never gotten around to it, but she now brought home a copy from the library and showed them to me.

When I began to read, for the first time, those forgotten classics of American socialism, it was one of the most moving experiences of my life.

The edition I first read was *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* put out by the *Appeal to Reason*, Girard, Kansas, 1908.

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*George Woodard, who teaches economics at a small New England college, is a long-time admirer of Debs and a close student of his life and work.*

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This is, of course, long out of print. More recently, in 1948, Hermitage Press brought out a similar edition, *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, which is still readily available. It contains most of what was in the 1908 edition, along with a number of things which came later, plus a non-socialist introduction by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

Of all these speeches and articles, the one which to me made Debs come alive and become a real flesh and blood figure was the one called "The Issue," first delivered extemporaneously on May 23, 1908, in Girard, Kansas. Debs was then living in that little western town, working for the *Appeal to Reason*. Word had just come from the Socialist Party Convention, meeting in Chicago, that the Party had for the third time nominated Debs as their candidate for the presidency. It was not every day that a resident of this town was nominated for the presidency, even by the Socialists; so all of the inhabitants, people of every political faith, gathered together in the public square to celebrate this honor which had been bestowed upon their community. Debs' friends did not tell him what was happening but led him out to the square with the explanation that the people were gathering for a street fair. There he found, to his surprise, that he was the center of attraction, and he got up and delivered what was probably the greatest speech of his career. In it, he was speaking to all of the different sorts of people whom he saw before him in that audience, the day laborers, unemployed tramps, small businessmen, the farmer from his squalid shack on the edge of town.

This speech was later to become Debs' special campaign speech, which he gave at all times and places. It played a major role in the 1912 campaign at which time Debs polled about a million votes, the largest proportion of the total vote ever polled by a Socialist in America.

Once I read this speech aloud to a group of young college people. Present was an all-too typical middle-class youth who obviously had come in just to see how crazy the Socialists were. His presence made me very uneasy all the time that I was reading. But when I finished, to my surprise, he was the first to speak. He said:

Even I could almost buy that, and I've been a Republican all my life. Why that man is as different from any other radical I ever heard as day is from night. Of course, if I thought any Socialist was going to be elected President, I'd move to Cuba. But an American can respect that man because he is concerned about the individual.

There is no doubt that Debs' old campaign speech still has more power than any other introduction to socialism ever given to Americans.

If reading Debs' old campaign speech was what made me a

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follower of his, the thing which most stimulated my own thinking was his article "Sound Socialist Tactics" which appeared in the *International Socialist Review* of February, 1912. Here Debs clearly states his views as to how socialism is to be achieved in America. In my opinion, this article represents the high point reached thus far by American socialist thinking, and the advances which we must make in the future will have to rest on this foundation laid by Debs.

Among other writings and speeches which had a special impact on me are: the three brief pieces which came out in the *Appeal to Reason* in 1906 and 1907 and comprise Debs' side of the fierce polemic which he waged with Theodore Roosevelt on the Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone frameup; the fiery speeches made at the founding of the IWW in 1905; and the wonderful pamphlet, *You Railroad Workers*, a model of the right socialist approach to union men.

After I had to some extent made Debs' acquaintance through his own speeches and writings, I began to feel the need to read a good biography. I read all of the biographies of Debs that I could get hold of, but the one that seemed to me most valuable was *The Bending Cross* by Ray Ginger. This book has some weaknesses. Ginger was a very young man when he wrote it, and perhaps for that reason he at times seems to accept the critical judgments of his sources without adequately thinking them through for himself. Therefore his judgments are not at all times consistent with one another but vary with the sources from which they are taken.

Despite this weakness, Ginger's book, in the breadth of the material covered and the thoroughness of his sifting of the sources, stands in a class by itself, the most adequate biography of Debs that has yet been written.\*

Finally, I chanced to get hold of the little volume, *Talks with Debs in Terre Haute*, by David Karsner. This tells of its author's personal conversations and contact with Debs shortly after the latter's release from prison. Karsner never understood his hero, but because of that he gives an objective picture, more like a photograph than a painting. When I had finished this little book, Debs was an old friend.

Now that I have at long last made Debs' acquaintance, I come back to the question: what gave him his power to present the message of socialism to Americans?

I think the answer is partly that *Debs made socialism into something American*. He began to apply Marxism to the American scene. He understood how to lead Americans.

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\* The list price of this book is \$5.00. *Monthly Review* has been selling it at \$1.00. We have left only a few copies.—Ed.

## GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH DEBS

We are a people who, nearly all of us, read the daily press, have strong opinions about how our country should be run, and love to tell them to anyone who will listen. In that we differ from the people of many other lands who feel a much wider gulf between themselves and their political leaders.

A special approach is needed in order to lead a people like ourselves. And Debs knew that approach. We can be led to socialism only by someone who challenges us to think. We can only be led by someone who says, as Debs used to say:

If you wait for me to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness, you will remain right where you are. I would not lead you into the Promised Land if I could, because if I could lead you in, someone else could lead you out. You must learn to use your brains as well as your hands; the way the capitalists now use your hands and your brains.

For a long time Debs' secret was lost. But as we now approach his one hundredth anniversary, November 5, 1955, some of my generation are beginning to get acquainted with Debs.

The legend and tradition which surrounded Debs are again coming to life. And that is a very important thing, because such legends and traditions lend a physical and moral strength to any movement.

How often have I seen young people when they first hear of Debs. What enthusiasm it generates in them to learn that this tradition and this legend exist, and that American socialism has these roots which made it something really American!

Yes, my generation is beginning to get acquainted with Debs. But we would not be true to his legend and his tradition if we tried to go back to him. We must go forward to the vision which he saw of America's future.

And as this vision is born again among us, it presages a great resurgence of American socialism.

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*To reach the workers that are still in darkness and to open their eyes, that is the task, and to this we must give ourselves with all the strength we have, with patience that never fails, and an abiding faith in the ultimate victory.*

*It is impossible for a workingman to contemplate the situation and the outlook and have any intelligent conception of the trend and meaning of things without becoming a Socialist.*

—Eugene V. Debs

## IF THIS BE TREASON . . .

BY EUGENE V. DEBS

On Sunday afternoon, June 16, 1918, Debs made a speech at Canton, Ohio. As a direct consequence, he was indicted for violating the Espionage Law. The trial began on September 9th and ended on the 12th. Two days later, Debs was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld the sentence on March 10, 1919. On April 13th, Debs went to prison. On Christmas day, 1921, he was released, his sentence having been commuted to time served, by President Harding.

We have selected passages from speeches which Debs made at key points in the course of this experience with capitalist justice. They state his political views with admirable clarity; they reveal his courage and integrity better, perhaps, than any other incidents in his life; and they are among the finest examples of his style as a speaker and writer.—THE EDITORS

### THE CANTON, OHIO SPEECH

. . . I realize that, in speaking to you this afternoon, there are certain limitations placed upon the right of free speech. I must be exceedingly careful, prudent, as to what I say, and even more careful and prudent as to how I say it. I may not be able to say all I think; but I am not going to say anything that I do not think. I would rather a thousand times be a free soul in jail than to be a sycophant and coward in the streets. . . .

If it had not been for the men and women, who, in the past, have had the moral courage to go to jail, we would still be in the jungles. . . .

There is but one thing you have to be concerned about, and that is that you keep four-square with the principles of the international Socialist movement. It is only when you begin to compromise that trouble begins. So far as I am concerned, it does not matter what others may say, or think, or do, as long as I am sure that I am right with myself and the cause. There are so many who seek refuge in the popular side of a great question. As a Socialist, I have long since learned how to stand alone. . . .

I would be ashamed to admit that I had risen from the ranks. When I rise it will be with the ranks, and not from the ranks. . . .

Are we opposed to Prussian militarism? Why, we have been

## THE CANTON, OHIO SPEECH

fighting it since the day the Socialist movement was born; and we are going to fight it, day and night, until it is wiped from the face of the earth. Between us there is no truce—no compromise. . . .

I hate, I loathe, I despise Junkers and junkerdom. I have no earthly use for the Junkers of Germany, and not one particle more use for the Junkers in the United States. . . .

These are the gentry who are today wrapped up in the American flag, who shout their claim from the housetops that they are the only patriots, and who have their magnifying glasses in hand, scanning the country for evidence of disloyalty, eager to apply the brand of treason to the men who dare to even whisper their opposition to junker rule in the United States. No wonder Sam Johnson declared that "patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel." He must have had this Wall Street gentry in mind, or at least their prototypes, for in every age it has been the tyrant, the oppressor and the exploiter who has wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism, or religion, or both to deceive and overawe the people. . . .

Socialism is a growing idea; an expanding philosophy. It is spreading over the entire face of the earth. It is as vain to resist it as it would be to arrest the sunrise on the morrow. It is coming, coming, coming all along the line. . . .

Yes, my comrades, my heart is attuned to yours. Aye, all our hearts now throb as one great heart responsive to the battle-cry of the social revolution. Here, in this alert and inspiring assemblage our hearts are with the Bolsheviks of Russia. Those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades have by their incomparable valor and sacrifice added fresh lustre to the fame of the international movement. . . .

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder. . . . The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives. . . .

To turn your back on the corrupt Republican Party and the corrupt Democratic Party—the gold-dust lackeys of the ruling class—counts for something. It counts for still more after you have stepped out of those popular and corrupt capitalist parties to join a minority party that has an ideal, that stands for a principle, and fights for a cause. This will be the most important change you have ever made and the time will come when you will thank me for having made the suggestion. It was the day of days for me. I remember it well. It was like passing from midnight darkness to the noontide light of day. It came almost like a flash and found me ready. It must have been in such a flash that great, seething, throbbing Russia, prepared

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by centuries of slavery and tears and martyrdom, was transformed from a dark continent to a land of living light. . . .

And now for all of us to do our duty! The clarion call is ringing in our ears and we cannot falter without being convicted of treason to ourselves and our great cause.

Do not worry over the charge of treason to your masters, but be concerned about the treason that involves yourselves. Be true to yourself and you cannot be a traitor to any good cause on earth.

Yes, in good time we are going to sweep into power in this nation and throughout the world. We are going to destroy all enslaving and degrading capitalist institutions and re-create them as free and humanizing institutions. The world is daily changing before our eyes. The sun of capitalism is setting; the sun of Socialism is rising. It is our duty to build the new nation and the free republic. We need industrial and social builders. We Socialists are the builders of the beautiful world that is to be. We are all pledged to do our part. We are inviting—aye challenging you in the name of your own manhood and womanhood to join us and do your part.

In due time the hour will strike and this great cause triumphant—the greatest in history—will proclaim the emancipation of the working class and the brotherhood of all mankind.

## ADDRESS TO THE JURY

Gentlemen, I do not fear to face you in this hour of accusation, nor do I shrink from the consequences of my utterances or my acts. Standing before you, charged as I am with crime, I can yet look the world in the face, for in my conscience, in my soul, there is festering no accusation of guilt. . . .

I wish to admit the truth of all that has been testified to in this proceeding. I have no disposition to deny anything that is true. I would not, if I could, escape the results of an adverse verdict. I would not retract a word that I have uttered that I believe to be true to save myself from going to the penitentiary for the rest of my days. . . .

I admit being opposed to the present social system. I am doing what little I can, and have been for many years, to bring about a change that shall do away with the rule of the great body of the people by a relatively small class and establish in this country an industrial and social democracy.

When great changes occur in history, when great principles are



## ADDRESS TO THE JURY

involved, as a rule the majority are wrong. The minority are usually right. In every age there have been a few heroic souls who have been in advance of their time, who have been misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, sometimes put to death. Long after their martyrdom monuments were erected to them and garlands woven from their graves. . . .

William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Gerrit Smith, Thaddeus Stevens and other leaders of the Abolition movement who were regarded as public enemies and treated accordingly, were true to their faith and stood their ground. They are all in history. You are now teaching your children to revere their memories, while all of their detractors are in oblivion. . . .

I cannot take back a word I have said. I cannot repudiate a sentence I have uttered. I stand before you guilty of having made this speech. I do not know, I cannot tell, what your verdict may be; nor does it matter much, so far as I am concerned.

I am the smallest part of this trial. I have lived long enough to realize my own personal insignificance in relation to a great issue that involves the welfare of the whole people. What you may choose to do to me will be of small consequence after all. I am not on trial here. There is an infinitely greater issue that is being tried today in this court, though you may not be conscious of it. American institutions are on trial here before a court of American citizens. The future will render the final verdict.

And now, your honor, permit me to return my thanks for your patient consideration. And to you, gentlemen of the jury, for the kindness with which you have listened to me.

I am prepared for your verdict.

## STATEMENT TO THE COURT

Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, while there is a criminal element I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

I listened to all that was said in this court in support and justification of this prosecution, but my mind remains unchanged. I look upon the Espionage Law as a despotic enactment in flagrant

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conflict with democratic principles and with the spirit of free institutions. . . .

Your Honor, I have stated in this court that I am opposed to the social system in which we live; that I believe in a fundamental change—but if possible by peaceable and orderly means. . . .

Standing here this morning, I recall my boyhood. At fourteen I went to work in a railroad shop; at sixteen I was firing a freight engine on a railroad. I remember all the hardships and privations of that earlier day, and from that time until now my heart has been with the working class. I could have been in Congress long ago. I have preferred to go to prison. . . .

I am thinking this morning of the men in the mills and factories; of the men in the mines and on the railroads. I am thinking of the women who for a paltry wage are compelled to work out their barren lives; of the little children who in this system are robbed of their childhood and in their tender years are seized in the remorseless grasp of Mammon and forced into the industrial dungeons, there to feed the monster machines while they themselves are being starved and stunted, body and soul. I see them dwarfed and diseased and their little lives broken and blasted because in this high noon of our twentieth-century Christian civilization money is still so much more important than the flesh and blood of childhood. In very truth gold is god today and rules with pitiless sway in the affairs of men.

In this country—the most favored beneath the bending skies—we have vast areas of the richest and most fertile soil, material resources in inexhaustible abundance, the most marvelous productive machinery on earth, and millions of eager workers ready to apply their labor to that machinery to produce in abundance for every man, woman and child—and if there are still vast numbers of our people who are the victims of poverty and whose lives are an unceasing struggle all the way from youth to old age, until at last death comes to their rescue and stills their aching hearts and lulls these hapless victims to dreamless sleep, it is not the fault of the Almighty: it cannot be charged to nature, but it is due entirely to the outgrown social system in which we live that ought to be abolished not only in the interest of the toiling masses but in the higher interest of all humanity. . . .

I believe, Your Honor, in common with all Socialists, that this nation ought to own and control its own industries. I believe, as all Socialists do, that all things that are jointly needed and used ought to be jointly owned—that industry, the basis of our social life, instead of being the private property of the few and operated for their enrichment, ought to be the common property of all, democratically administered in the interest of all.

## STATEMENT TO THE COURT

I have been accused, Your Honor, of being an enemy of the soldier. I hope I am laying no flattering unction to my soul when I say that I don't believe the soldier has a more sympathetic friend than I am. If I had my way there would be no soldiers. But I realize the sacrifice they are making, Your Honor. I can think of them. I can feel for them. I can sympathize with them. That is one of the reasons why I have been doing what little has been in my power to bring about a condition of affairs in this country worthy of the sacrifices they have made and that they are now making in its behalf. . . .

I am opposing a social order in which it is possible for one man who does absolutely nothing that is useful, to amass a fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of men and women who work all the days of their lives secure barely enough for a wretched existence.

This order of things cannot always endure. I have registered my protest against it. I recognize the feebleness of my effort, but, fortunately, I am not alone. There are multiplied thousands of others who, like myself, have come to realize that before we may truly enjoy the blessing of civilized life, we must reorganize society upon a mutual and cooperative basis; and to this end we have organized a great economic and political movement that spreads over the face of all the earth.

There are today upwards of sixty millions of Socialists, loyal, devoted adherents to this cause, regardless of nationality, race, creed, color or sex. They are all making common cause. They are spreading with tireless energy the propaganda of the new social order. They are waiting, watching and working hopefully through all the hours of the day and the night. They are still in a minority. But they have learned how to be patient and to bide their time. They feel—they know, indeed—that the time is coming, in spite of all opposition, all persecution, when this emancipating gospel will spread among all the peoples, and when this minority will become the triumphant majority and, sweeping into power, inaugurate the greatest social and economic change in history.

In that day we shall have the universal commonwealth—the harmonious cooperation of every nation with every other nation on earth. . . .

Your Honor, I ask no mercy and I plead for no immunity. I realize that finally the right must prevail. I never so clearly comprehended as now the great struggle between the powers of greed and exploitation on the one hand and upon the other the rising hosts of industrial freedom and social justice.

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I can see the dawn of the better day for humanity. The people are awakening. In due time they will and must come to their own.

"When the mariner, sailing over tropic seas, looks for relief from his weary watch, he turns his eyes toward the southern cross, burning luridly above the tempest-vexed ocean. As the midnight approaches, the southern cross begins to bend, the whirling worlds change their places, and with starry finger-points the Almighty marks the passage of time upon the dial of the universe, and though no bell may beat the glad tidings, the lookout knows that the midnight is passing and that relief and rest are close at hand.

"Let the people everywhere take heart of hope, for the cross is bending, the midnight is passing, and joy cometh with the morning."

He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done,  
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun.  
That wrong is done to us, and they are slaves most base,  
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all the race.

I am now prepared to receive your sentence.

## AFTER-PRISON SPEECH

I am just recovering from the effects of a speech I made almost four years ago. That must have been a very telling speech. It was begun at Canton, Ohio, and completed at Atlanta, Georgia. But there is nothing to regret. I opposed the war. I still oppose war. I said then, I say now, that I would not go to war at the command of any capitalist country on the face of this earth. . . .

I spoke at that time from a deep sense of conviction, and ten years is a very moderate sentence for having an opinion of your own in the United States of America. If you and I believed in war we would have the honesty and courage to go to the front and get our share of it. . . .

All over the wide world the victims of this system, of the war for which the system is responsible, the toiling and producing masses, the men and women who do the world's work, are lifting their bowed bodies from the earth and beginning to stand erect. Regardless of nationality, or creed, or color, or sex, they are recognizing their common kinship, grasping hands, removing the boundary lines, and calling each other "Comrade." They are beginning to recognize their common identity, to take an inventory of their own resources, to develop their capacity to think clearly. They have struggled through the ages from slavery to serfdom, and through serfdom to wage-slavery, to become freemen and freewomen in Socialism, the next

## AFTER-PRISON SPEECH

inevitable stage of our advancing civilization. Millions of them everywhere are beginning to ask why it is that they must press their rags still closer lest they press against the silk garments that their fingers are fashioning; why it is they must offend their hunger with the odor of the banquet they have spread, but may take no part in; why it is they must walk within the shadows of the palaces they have erected, but may not enter. They are beginning to think, they will soon begin to act.

The ruling classes were going to save civilization—and now look abroad at Europe, a vast armed camp, all of these so-called allies now pitted against each other and ready to fly at each other's throat. It is the way in which they have kept faith with the people and made the world safe for democracy.

I believe in the ultimate destiny of mankind. I believe and know that in this struggle, however fiercely it may be waged, whatever changing fortunes may be, that all the latent powers within us are being developed, and we expand to our true proportion; that we discharge our duty even though we do go to prison. Here let me say that I would rather be in jail with my self-respect than be on the street with a gag on my lips. I despise and defy their laws.

While I was born in the State of Indiana, I am not a citizen of the United States. My conscience lost me my citizenship. That is better than if my citizenship cost me my conscience. . . .

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*You will be assailed within and without, spat upon by the very ones that you are doing your best to serve, and at certain crucial moments find yourself isolated, absolutely alone as if to compel surrender, but in those moments, if you have the nerve, you become supreme.*

—Eugene V. Debs

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*You do not need the capitalist. He could not exist an instant without you. You would just begin to live without him. You do everything and he has everything; and some of you imagine that if it were not for him you would have no work. As a matter of fact, he does not employ you at all; you employ him to take from you what you produce, and he faithfully sticks to his task. If you can stand it, he can; and if you don't change this relation, I am sure he won't.*

—Eugene V. Debs

## QUOTES FROM DEBS

The following quotations, like those distributed throughout this issue, have been selected from the entire published record of Debs' speeches and writings with a view to illuminating both the man and his ideals. Debs was more orator than writer, and he often wrote as he spoke, in short paragraphs and without carefully worked-out transitions. Such a style lends itself to the production of quotable sayings and aphorisms, and Debs was a master of the style.

We have not cluttered up these pages with dates and sources: to do so would distract attention from the form and content of the material itself, and thus would defeat the end in view. To those who want to read more extensively in Debs' works—and we hope that means all who are exposed to the power and charm of these samples—we recommend especially the Hermitage Press edition of *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (1948). An earlier collection is *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* which was published in 1908 by *The Appeal to Reason*, Girard, Kansas. The most complete and authoritative biography is Ray Ginger's *The Bending Cross* which was published by Rutgers University Press in 1949. The original printing of *The Bending Cross* contains extensive bibliographical and source materials which were omitted from a subsequent printing made for the Book Find Club. It is the latter edition that MR has been selling at \$1 a copy. We still have a few copies which will go on a first-come-first-served basis.—THE EDITORS

Strike down liberty, no matter by what subtle and infernal art the deed is done, the spinal cord of humanity is sundered and the world is paralyzed by the indescribable crime.

As a rule hogs are only raised where they have good health and grow fat. Any old place will do to raise human beings.

I do not oppose the insane asylum—but I abhor and condemn the cutthroat system that robs man of his reason, drives him to insanity and makes the lunatic asylum an indispensable adjunct to every civilized community.

Fleece your fellows! That is "business," and you are a captain of industry. Having "relieved" your victims of their pelts, dance and make merry to "relieve" their agony. This is "charity" and you are a philanthropist.

The churches are always numerous where vice is rampant. They seem to spring from the same soil and thrive in the same climate.

There never was any social inferiority that was not the shrivelled fruit of economic inequality. . . .

I have said and say again that, properly speaking, there is no Negro question outside of the labor question—the working class struggle. Our position as Socialists and as a party is perfectly plain. We have simply to say: "The class struggle is colorless." The capitalists, white, black and other shades, are on one side and the workers, white, black and all other colors, on the other side. . . . when the working class have triumphed in the class struggle and stand forth economic as well as political free men, the race problem will forever disappear.

The rapid fire injunction is a great improvement on the gatling gun. Nothing can get beyond its range and it never misses fire.

A modern industrial plant has a hundred trades and parts of trades represented in its working force. To have these workers parcelled out to a hundred unions is to divide and not to organize them, to give them over to factions and petty leadership and leave them an easy prey to the machinations of the enemy. The dominant craft should control the plant or, rather, the union, and it should embrace the entire working force. This is the industrial plan, the modern method applied to modern conditions, and it will in time prevail. . . .

The work of organizing has little, if any, permanent value unless the work of education, the right kind of education, goes hand in hand with it.

There is no cohesiveness in ignorance.

The members of a trade-union should be taught the true import, the whole object of the labor movement and understand its entire program.

They should know that the labor movement means more, infinitely more, than a paltry increase in wages and the strike necessary to secure it; that while it engages to do all that possibly can be done to better the working conditions of its members, its higher object is to overthrow the capitalist system of private ownership of the tools of labor, abolish wage-slavery and achieve the freedom of the whole working class and, in fact, of all mankind.

In the capitalist system profit is prior to and more important than the life or liberty of the workingman.

The capitalist's profit first, last and always. He owns the tools and only allows the worker to use them on condition that he can

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extract a satisfactory profit from his labor. If he cannot do this the tools are not allowed to be used—he locks them up and waits.

The capitalist does no work himself; that is, no useful or necessary work. He spends his time watching other parasites in the capitalist game of "dog eat dog," or in idleness or dissipation. The workers who use his tools give him all the wealth they produce and he allows them a sufficient wage to keep them in working order.

The wage is to the worker what oil is to the machine.

The machine cannot run without lubricant and the worker cannot work and reproduce himself without being fed, clothed and housed; this is his lubricant and the amount he requires to keep him in running order regulates his wage.

No successful capitalist wants competition—for himself—he only wants it for the working class, so that he can buy his labor power at the lowest competitive price in the labor market.

If by its fruit we know the tree, so by the same token do we know our social system. Its corrupt fruit betrays its foul and unclean nature and condemns it to death.

Full opportunity for full development is the unalienable right of all.

He who denies it is a tyrant; he who does not demand it is a coward; he who is indifferent to it is a slave; he who does not desire it is dead.

The earth for all the people! That is the demand.

The machinery of production and distribution for all the people! That is the demand.

The collective ownership and control of industry and its democratic management in the interest of all the people! That is the demand.

The elimination of rent, interest and profit and the production of wealth to satisfy the wants of all the people! That is the demand.

Cooperative industry in which all shall work together in harmony as the basis of a new social order, a higher civilization, a real republic! That is the demand.

The end of class struggles and class rule, of master and slave, of ignorance and vice, of poverty and shame, of cruelty and crime—the birth of freedom, the dawn of brotherhood, the beginning of MAN! That is the demand.

This is Socialism!



## QUOTES FROM DEBS

Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and fallen and bruised itself, and risen again; been seized by the throat and choked and clubbed into insensibility; enjoined by courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, shot down by regulars, traduced by the press, frowned upon by public opinion, deceived by politicians, threatened by priests, repudiated by renegades, preyed upon by grafters, infested by spies, deserted by cowards, betrayed by traitors, bled by leeches, and sold out by leaders, but, notwithstanding all this, and all these, it is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known, and its historic mission of emancipating the workers of the world from the thralldom of the ages is as certain of ultimate realization as the setting of the sun.

The Republican and Democratic parties, or, to be more exact, the Republican-Democratic Party, represent the capitalist class in the class struggle. They are the political wings of the capitalist system and such differences as arise between them relate to spoils and not to principles.

With either of these parties in power one thing is always certain and that is that the capitalist class is in the saddle and the working class under the saddle.

Ignorance alone stands in the way of Socialist success. The capitalist parties understand this and use their resources to prevent the workers from seeing the light.

Intellectual darkness is essential to industrial slavery.

The red flag is an omen of ill, a sign of terror to every tyrant, every robber and every vampire that sucks the life of labor and mocks at its misery.

It is an emblem of hope, a bow of promise to all the oppressed and downtrodden of the earth.

There is an army of men who serve as officers who are on the salary list who get a good living keeping the working class divided. They start out with good intentions as a rule. They really want to do something to serve their fellows. They leave the shops or the mines as common workingmen. They are elected officers of a labor organization and they change their clothes. They now wear a white shirt and a standing collar. They change their habits and their methods. They have been used to cheap clothes, coarse fare and to associating with their fellow-workers. After they have been elevated to official position, as if by magic they are recognized by those who previously scorned them and held them in contempt. They find that some of

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the doors that were previously barred against them now swing inward, and they can actually put their feet under the mahogany of the capitalist.

Our common workingman is now a labor leader. The great capitalist pats him on the back and tells him that he knew long ago that he was a coming man, that it was a fortunate thing for the workers of the world that he had been born, that in fact they had been long waiting for just such a wise and conservative leader. And this has a certain effect upon our new-made leader, and unconsciously, perhaps, he begins to change. . . . He repeats his visit the next day, or the next week, and is introduced to some other distinguished person he had read about, but never dreamed of meeting, and thus goes on the transformation. All his dislikes disappear and all feeling of antagonism vanishes. He concludes that they are really most excellent people and, now that he has seen and knows them, he agrees with them that there is no necessary conflict between workers and capitalists. And he proceeds to carry out this pet capitalist theory and he can only do it by betraying the class that trusted him and lifted him as high above themselves as they could reach.

When the club of a policeman descends upon the head of a workingman he hears an echo of the vote he cast at the preceding election.

The capitalist politician tells you on occasion that you are the salt of the earth; and if you are, you had better begin to salt down the capitalist class.

Can you imagine a fox and goose peace congress? Just fancy such a meeting, the goose lifting its wings in benediction, and the fox whispering, "Let us prey."

We want a system in which the worker shall get what he produces and the capitalist shall produce what he gets. That is a square deal.

To sum up: They are in the capitalist class; you in the working class. They are masters; you slaves. They fleece and pluck; you furnish the wool and feathers.

That is the basis of the class struggle.

As individual wage-slaves you are helpless and your condition hopeless. As a class, you are the greatest power between the earth

## QUOTES FROM DEBS

and the stars. As a *class*, your chains turn to spider-webs and in your presence capitalists shrivel up and blow away.

The individual wage-slave must recognize the power of class unity and do all he can to bring it about.

That is what is called *class-consciousness*, in the light of which may be seen the *class struggle* in startling vividness.

The class-conscious worker recognizes the necessity of organization, economic and political, and of using every weapon at his command—the strike, the boycott, the ballot and every other—to achieve his emancipation.

He, therefore, joins the union of his *class* and the party of his *class* and gives his time and energy to the work of educating and lining up his *class* for the struggle of his *class* for emancipation.

Of all the silly sayings of the self-satisfied of the present day, the oft-repeated falsehood that there are “no classes” in this country takes the lead, and is often made to serve as the prelude to the preposterous warning that periodically peals from rich and sumptuous club banquets, at which the President and other patriots are guests, that “it is treason to array class against class in the United States.”

If there are no classes, how can they be arrayed against each other?

To the extent that the working class has power based upon class-consciousness, force is unnecessary; to the extent that power is lacking, force can only result in harm.

I am opposed to any tactics which involve stealth, secrecy, intrigue, and necessitate acts of individual violence for their execution.

The work of the Socialist movement must all be done out in the broad open light of day. Nothing can be done by stealth that can be of any advantage to it in this country.

The workers can be emancipated only by their own collective will, the power inherent in themselves as a class, and this collective will and conquering power can only be the result of education, enlightenment and self-imposed discipline.

Socialism is the antithesis of capitalism. It means nothing that capitalism means, and everything that capitalism does not.

Capitalism means private ownership, competition, slavery and starvation.

Socialism means social ownership, cooperation, freedom and abundance for all.

## EUGENE V. DEBS—THE MAN

"Few Americans stood apart from the national sorrow at the death of Eugene Debs," wrote Ray Ginger in *The Bending Cross*. Even those who during his lifetime had attacked and abused him without mercy now felt obliged to acknowledge his greatness. The sincere admiration of his enemies, indeed, may be taken as the crowning tribute to his strength of character and integrity of purpose. We print here the best example of that admiration that has come to our attention, the obituary from the *New York Evening World* of October 23, 1926.—THE EDITORS

Comparatively few Americans have understood, or known, the late Eugene V. Debs. Most have known of him as a Socialist leader, and these are prone to look upon him as a dangerous character. Some assume that he must have been a bit crude and vulgar—and nothing could be more remote from the truth.

Eugene Debs was a brilliant man of wide culture, refined in his tastes and intimate associations, numbering among his closest friends and admirers such men as Walt Whitman, Robert G. Ingersoll, Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley. The truth is that he had the spirit of a poet, and it was the poet's sympathy for the unfortunate and the suffering, the poet's hate of injustice, that made him an apostle of protest. His sympathies were as tender as a woman's. His tact as delicate. He had the courtesy and courtliness of a Cavalier, with the conscience of the Puritan. Utterly without the intolerance usually associated with men of his political tenets, he numbered among his friends men of all parties and all classes. In his home town, where he was so well known, bankers will pay tribute to his personal qualities.

Had he not been so easily moved to tears at the sight of suffering, had he been less the poet, his brilliant, winsome personality, his magnetism and eloquence would have given him high place in the political life of the Republic. His heart dominated his head—good as it was. No one could know him and hate him. No one could know him and have contempt for him. It was easy to regret his political course, but no one could doubt the sincerity of his course. He paid the penalty of his course with a gallantry that commands the respect of all. He never begged. He never whined. Thus the dying Debs with trembling fingers wrote for his wife, as he was sinking into the final coma, his own epitaph:

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll—  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

As a human being, as a man, as a friend, as a neighbor, he was a rare personage—one seldom met. He wanted to serve his fellow men.

## **SOCIALISM—USA AND USSR: SOME QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

BY ALEXANDER LESLIE

The questions below were submitted to us with the request that we publish them together with our own answers. They seem to us to be eminently sensible questions about which every socialist ought to have strong convictions. Without presuming to speak for anyone but ourselves, we have tried to answer them as concisely and briefly as possible. At the same time, we are sending galleys of this piece to the editors of two other socialist monthlies, *Political Affairs* and *The American Socialist*, inviting them to try their hands at answering the questions. If they accept, we will publish their answers in an early issue. After that, we shall be glad to hear from our readers. Whether space will be devoted to a general discussion will depend, of course, on the nature and quality of reader responses.

Our answers are printed in italics after each question. We are perfectly well aware that they are incomplete and in a fundamental sense unsatisfactory. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, whole treatises could be—indeed have been—written on the numerous social, political, and ethical problems which underlie these questions. Short answers must necessarily take a great deal for granted that ought to be explored and explained. But even more to the point, our own ideas about these problems are not fixed and frozen but rather are continuously evolving and (we hope) maturing. Recent years have taught us that issues we once thought simple are complicated. The cold war and the witch hunt have made us see civil liberties in a new light. We are not absolute civil libertarians any more than we are absolute pacifists, but over the years the conviction has grown on us that a good society without civil liberty is as impossible as a good society without peace.

There is no good society anywhere in the world today. But a good society is more nearly possible today than ever before, and there are powerful forces and tendencies moving us in that direction. The job of socialists is not only to encourage and strengthen them but also to keep alive and radiant the vision of the goal. This is not soft-headed sentimentalism. Sentimentalism in matters of politics and ethics consists in refusal to face the truth, in rejecting struggle because it cannot be conducted on one's own terms, in judging oppressed and oppressor by the same "lofty" standards. But to have ideals and to proclaim them to the world, to be prepared to work and sacrifice for them among one's friends as well as to fight for them against one's foes—these are surely no more than the elementary principles of socialist behavior. We have tried to keep them in mind in formulating our answers to Mr. Leslie's questions.—THE EDITORS

"You say you're for socialism—but what does that mean? What would a socialist America be like? Something like what they have in Russia? Or what?"

*Alexander Leslie is the pen name of an American socialist who has been active in the left-wing movement as a student, steelworker, musician, and trade unionist since 1936.*

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Questions like these have surely been asked thousands of times during the past fifteen years. Yet I think it safe to say that on no other subject does there exist among American socialists, of all tendencies, such a vacuum in political thought.

"Industry will be nationalized"—and having said this, one has exhausted not merely all that has been agreed on but almost all that has been written on the subject. If the American public today is less interested in socialism than at any time since 1900, it is not entirely due to fifteen years of prosperity, ten of them years of cold-war-cum-McCarthyism. Part of the blame must certainly be shared by American socialists who, regardless of affiliation, have unwittingly turned socialism into an abstraction which nobody but a devotee or a fool would accept.

In excusing this political lack, it is often said that "you cannot blueprint the future." Of course not. Yet (to pursue the metaphor) nobody, in buying a house, goes shopping for blueprints. First of all you want to know what it will look like, how many bedrooms it will have, how big a kitchen, and so forth. Blueprints come later, if at all.

Nobody, obviously, can reasonably expect a socialist or group of socialists to say now, precisely and irrevocably, what they will do ten, fifteen, or more years hence. But, short of this, is it impossible to sketch, if only roughly, the probable features of American socialism? I think not.

Socialism, after all, has been a reality in the USSR for nearly forty years. One cannot, of course, mechanically transpose Soviet institutions to the American scene—though many anti-socialists and even some naive socialists have tried to do so. Soviet socialism is obviously the product, not merely of the general crisis of capitalism, but of the specific conditions, internal and external, under which the USSR has developed—including the whole history of Russia *before* 1917.

Is American history different from that of Tsarist Russia? Obviously, and radically. Is the world of 1955 different from that of 1917? The answer is the same—and, whatever the exact shape of the future, the world of 1965 or 1970 is likely to be even more different. American socialism, then, while resembling Soviet socialism in certain respects, will inevitably differ from it widely in others. But one can, I think, be somewhat more specific and define the *probable* nature of some of these similarities and differences.

The main question involved is this: which features of the Soviet system are characteristic of socialism as such and which are the product of specifically Russian conditions? If we can answer this, if we can determine how these conditions have shaped the general features of socialism into their specifically Soviet form, we should be able to deduce some of the ways in which the very different condi-

tions in and around the United States, now and in the future, will shape these same general features into a specifically *American* form.

One must bear in mind, however, that socialism in America or in any other country is the product, not merely of blind historical forces but of the conscious thought and struggle of millions of people. As Engels pointed out many years ago, economic forces may be the decisive factor in history but the elements of the social superstructure, *including human consciousness*, "also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form." American socialism will be not only what American and world history make it but, in part, what American socialists and (ultimately) the majority of the American people consciously *choose* to make it.

The questions which I have formulated below, then, concern not merely what is probable but what is desirable. They will, I hope, provoke discussion among socialists of all tendencies. Many of them are admittedly not easily answered, nor can it be reasonably expected that complete and definitive answers to all of them will emerge in a short time. I believe, however, that frank and searching discussion around them will help stimulate and clarify American socialist thought and—ultimately—help to win for socialism far more adherents than it now possesses.

### The Questions

(1) It is generally conceded that any democratic government has the right to protect itself against individuals or groups practicing, actively planning, or inciting violence. It is likewise evident that any such government threatened by civil war or invasion must inevitably suspend certain constitutional guarantees until the danger is past—or cease to exist as a government.

The USSR has of course observed these necessary conditions of national existence. In addition, however, it appears (from Vishinsky's *Law of the Soviet State*) that in the USSR constitutional guarantees are, as a matter of principle, denied to "enemies of socialism." Moreover, the Soviet police and judicial systems as they concern the rights of the individual citizen have evidently developed in such a way as to leave room for serious abuses, such as the Soviet press itself has pointed out—though often, unfortunately, only after a lapse of years.

Under what circumstances (if any) should civil rights in a socialist America be denied to anti-socialist individuals or groups who are not practicing, actively planning, or inciting violence?

*Under no circumstances.*

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(2) Many socialists, including the writer, believe that propaganda which incites racial or national hatred should be outlawed in a socialist America, or even sooner.

Can this end be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment? If not, should the Constitution be amended, and how?

*We believe that this end can be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment. The First Amendment does not protect libel or slander, and no one claims that it should. A group of people can be libeled or slandered as well as an individual, even though the fact may not be explicitly recognized in Anglo-American jurisprudence. And what is "propaganda which incites racial or national hatred" but a vicious form of group slander? What is needed here, it seems to us, is new law based on assured scientific knowledge and almost universally accepted ethical principles. We do not for a moment minimize the practical difficulties in all matters of this kind where lines must be drawn and decisions made. But to deal with these difficulties is precisely the social function of the science (or art, if you prefer) of jurisprudence. We in this country are proud of our accomplishments in this field: should we now assume that they are incapable of being extended in the future?*

(3) An important characteristic of bourgeois democracy (as contrasted with absolute monarchy or fascism) is the existence of diverse sources of political and moral authority. These include state organs, political parties (and factions within both), various mass communications media, labor unions, churches, and the like. Most, but not all, of the groups are made up of, owned by, or controlled by capitalists. Nonetheless, they frequently differ from each other, sometimes sharply, in both theory and practice.

In the USSR, on the other hand, there has been for at least 25 years but *one* significant source of political and moral authority: the Communist Party. There are many organizations in the USSR, but except for the churches they are all under Communist leadership. Where criticism and debate occur (as they constantly do), they appear to conform strictly to such limits as the Communist Party deems desirable.

Is the leadership of all or virtually all public bodies by one party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, would it nonetheless be desirable in a socialist America?

*Socialist societies are not going to be built anywhere without strong and determined leadership, and it seems to be no more than a truism that such leadership will have to come from socialist parties. In backward countries threatened by outside intervention and under the iron necessity of forcing the pace of economic development, it is*



probably unavoidable that this leadership should for a time be the monopoly of a single party and should pervade nearly all aspects of social life. But we are not persuaded that this is necessarily so in advanced countries which, when they finally do go socialist, will be joining a community of long-established socialist societies. The truth is that we do not know enough to answer the first half of this question with certainty, but on the basis of the evidence to date we believe that a one-party state is not inevitable.

As to the second half of the question, we have no doubt that it is desirable to avoid a one-party state if possible. Too much concentration of power is a dangerous thing—the fact that capitalist hacks scream this in our ears all the time doesn't make it any less true—and competition for good ends is beneficial. We should work for a socialist America in which there is as much diffusion of power as the requirements of comprehensive economic planning will permit and in which there is plenty of opportunity for open and friendly rivalry for the honor of leadership.

(4) An important task of any truly socialist government is bound to be the transferring of mass communications (press, radio, TV, motion pictures) from their present overwhelmingly capitalist control to popular control. In the USSR this process has developed in such a way that all mass communications are in effect controlled by the governing party.

Is the control of mass communications by a single party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, should some degree of access to and control of mass communications be guaranteed, in a socialist America, to non-socialist and/or anti-socialist groups and individuals?

It is in answering questions like this that one is most subject to the temptation to draw up blueprints. Say that such access should be guaranteed to all, and you will immediately be asked how it is to be done. Since there is really no way it can be done—under any form of society—you may soon find yourself, if you are not careful, devising ingenious schemes for assuring as much access as possible to as many people as possible.

In our view, this sort of thing is a waste of time. What can usefully be said in answer to the question, it seems to us, is (a) that it is not inevitable that a single party should establish a monopoly over the mass communications media (this was already implied in our answer to question number 3), and (b) that it is possible to think of several methods of making access to these media reasonably free. For example, all social and cultural organizations (political parties, trade unions, universities, and so on) might be guaranteed the right to own their own printing equipment, broadcasting facilities, and

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*the like, and to use these facilities as they see fit. As to unattached individuals, why shouldn't they retain the same privilege they have under capitalism, namely, the privilege of passing the hat, starting (say) a magazine, and publishing it as long as enough people are interested to buy it and/or make up the deficit?*

*Here again, as in the case of earlier questions, we are under no illusions that everything is going to be plain sailing. But we see no insuperable obstacles to the solution of these problems under a socialist society. What more can one reasonably ask for at this stage of the game?*

(5) Any socialist government will find itself deeply and directly involved in cultural and scientific activities. Many practical decisions in these fields (whether to film this script, whether to support this research project, and so on) which, under capitalism, would usually be made by private (generally capitalist) persons or groups, become matters of government and party policy.

In the USSR, therefore, both government and party intervene both ideologically and administratively in cultural and scientific matters. This intervention, however, has often been carried to the point where the aesthetic and ideological standards of the government and party have become absolutely binding on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public. Cultural works which do not conform to these standards have reached the public with difficulty, if at all; some which have reached the public have later been withdrawn. Attempts have been made to decide questions of scientific theory by party decision.

In a socialist America, to what degree (if any) should the government or governing party seek to impose administratively its aesthetic and ideological standards on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public?

*We do not think it should seek to impose them by any means, administrative or other. This does not mean that the leadership should have no standards nor that it should refrain from trying to persuade the public to accept them. But that is an entirely different question.*

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*We do not maintain freedom in order to permit eccentricity to flourish; we maintain freedom in order that society may profit from criticism, even eccentric criticism. We do not encourage dissent for sentimental reasons; we encourage dissent because we cannot live without it.*

—Henry Steele Commager, *Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent*

## THINKERS AND TREASURERS

BY BARROWS DUNHAM

### Part II

The treasurer, we have said, tries to collect the greatest amount of dues from the greatest number of people. He does this better, as a rule, by persuading people to pay rather than by coercing them. And anyway, if he does use coercion, he has to justify it. Some theorizing is unavoidable: if he fails to explain, the membership will begin to suspect that he fears to.

In the theory which thereupon develops, the organization appears as a means of getting the members what they dearly want—exclusively so, in fact, since the members will be assured that they can't get it anywhere else as certainly or as excellently or as abundantly. The essentials of huckstering are laid down in the nature of every organization.

Now, I suppose that when mankind has got control over physical nature *and* over itself, there really will be a universal body which does "dispense salvation." None has appeared thus far, and indeed none could have appeared. But there have been not a few organizations which made the claim.

Among these, the various Christian churches would rank high, because they assert a power to establish (or prevent) the eternal well-being of every soul. However such terms as "well-being" or "happiness" are defined, they clearly express ultimates. The claims of the churches, then, amount to this: that there is no other organization concerned with matters of equal importance.

In Medieval Europe, the Church, despite conflicts which were various and bitter enough, achieved a convenient union of theory and practice. The organization was itself political, for religion is always a form of politics. The interests of the Church, following its possessions and its power, belonged to an order of affairs called "temporal," and the justifying, explanatory reasons belonged to an order of affairs called "spiritual." The extreme convenience of this division lay in the fact that the actually guiding principles did not have to appear among the justifying reasons, while at the same time the justifying reasons did not have to guide.

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*The second and third parts of a four-part essay, by the author of Man Against Myth, Giant In Chains, and other notable works in the field of philosophy.*

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Two doctrines supported the great edifice of theory: (1) that the truth of most sentences, and of all important sentences, is determinable by official pronouncement, and (2) that there is an order of being which is better and fairer and realer than that in which our sad existence abbreviates itself. These two doctrines we may call authoritarianism and supernaturalism respectively. They are the most ingenious doctrines ever devised for broadening the range and intensifying the rate of dues-collection. Let us observe:

(1) The treasurer must keep persuading the members to pay dues. Now, in order to persuade people—that is to say, in order to get them to act voluntarily upon a set of propositions—you must establish some belief that the propositions themselves are true. Perhaps they are not true, but they must seem so if they are to evoke action. Nobody, not even a lunatic, voluntarily acts upon propositions which he believes to be false.

Now, in point of fact, a treasurer can do hardly anything about making a sentence true. Many treasurers tried, and for a long time, to connect the adjective "true" with the sentence, "The earth is flat." In the course of trying, they killed a number of men and excommunicated others. But all this while the earth remained spherical and the sentence false.

Unfortunately, however, the sentence's being true or false is quite a different thing from its being believed to be so. On this difference rests the possibility and the fact of error, for, obviously, error lies in believing a certain sentence to be true when it is actually false, or false when it is actually true. And although there is hardly anything a treasurer can do to *make* a sentence true or false, there is a great deal he can do about making it *believed* to be the one or the other. "This mouthwash will kill germs" may, as a sentence, be quite false, while at the same time skillful advertising makes some people think it true.

Treasurers like to have people associate the adjective "true" with a certain set of sentences—those, namely, which justify the actual mode of dues-collection. If a treasurer can induce people to make the association simply and solely upon his asserting it, then he has exerted as much control as is possible or even imaginable over human beliefs. That is to say, if whenever he asserts a sentence as true everybody accepts that it is so, then the treasurer can readily get the beliefs he wants and the consequent action he wants.

This is the entire basis of the astounding idea that truth is determinable by pronouncement: it is a political device for the collection of dues. It has, and can have, no other ground. Any connection between it and truth is purely accidental, for a man who should be

able to establish an infallible correspondence between his own assertions and objective fact would have to be able to create at will all the phenomena he describes. His powers would then be miraculous for a mere man, since they would be co-extensive with those of the entire universe.

Thus (2) authoritarianism in knowledge leads to and involves some notion of things supernatural—of things, that is to say, not existing within space and time nor displaying the familiar probabilities of that world. The concept has been mystically embroidered, but it suggests at least a world in which souls survive the occurrence of physical death, bodies are raised in preternatural brightness at the last trump, and a happy ending—or, rather, endlessness—supervenes.

By contrast, the "temporal order," the world of space and time, is full of grotesque injustice and stupendous ills; it contains malevolence, murder, and McCarthy. Of this world the gross transactions seem not saved but damned; and, judged by performance *here*, churches, states, and all other institutions are failures upon the kindest estimate. If any of *them* claimed to offer salvation here below, laughter would drench and scorn would wither such fantasies of self-praise.

And so the treasurer doesn't offer you salvation where moth and rust doth corrupt and the collector breaks through to steal. He offers you salvation where no corruption is possible and no collector exists. *There* the treasurer must make good his boast of salvation or not at all. For he obviously fails in the world of space and time, and if there be no other world, then he fails altogether.

Now, to these views men have a certain disposition to assent. For example, there is an infantile ease about authoritarianism: it amounts to "letting Father decide." And the concept of a supernatural order consoles the membership, when their desires are frustrated and their consciences outraged. Support these psychological inducements by quiet pressure and an occasional *auto-da-fé*, and you can make multitudes believe.

So pervasive a state will not yield to the sheer love of truth. A few minds, candid and sublime, may yearn to know what actually is the case; but it takes a whole group of people with a common economic motive, an identical lure of getting and spending, to effect a general change.

From the sixteenth century through the eighteenth, precisely such a group developed and in due course made its conquest of European society. It took its name from the most innocent of its habits, that of living in towns: not Marx, but the French language itself, dubbed this group the *bourgeoisie*. It dealt in extraordinary objects, namely

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"commodities," things made not for use but for sale. And thus the bourgeoisie announced that it cared less about providing society with goods than about providing itself with profits.

The logic of this seemed plain. "They that have wares cannot want money," wrote Thomas Mun, about 1630. If you sought more money, you had to make more goods; and if you sought more goods, you had to learn more about the nature of the world. It followed that commerce, a child of appetite and opportunity, nursed and reared the sciences it needed and fashioned philosophy into a surer guide. The angels which medieval thought had left in the sky now moved upon the earth as engines of infinite production.

It is now generally understood (as once it was not) that the physical world, in order to be known, must be observed, tested, analyzed. You cannot be content with descriptions of nature which have descended from a remote past; on the contrary, you must submit everything to study and criticism. For instance, you wouldn't expect to produce goods on the basis of what Aristotle had to say about the world, because much of what he said was false and much of what was true he didn't say.

The need for new surveys of nature begets impatience and contempt for old assertions. A scientist may use predecessors whose skill is proved, but he will scarcely trust authority as such, however confirmed (it was Locke's phrase) "by general tradition and a reverend beard." Thus the habit of submission is loosened. Instead of truth by prestige, there is truth by demonstration; instead of a man to pronounce, there is a method to guide.

Now, the remarkable thing about a method is that anyone who understands it can use it. When the method is one for determining what sentences are false and what true, anyone who understands this method can make the determination. It turns out, then, that you don't have to be pope or emperor or aristocrat in order to know what is the case, but that you can know it even if you are plowman or artisan or gentleman bourgeois.

Thus developed, during three centuries, what may be called the democratization of truth. With it developed also the right of private judgment, the supremacy of the individual conscience, the "universal priesthood of all believers"—the conviction, in short, that a rational man has to make up his own mind about important questions. Protestantism proclaimed this a Christian duty; the Enlightenment proclaimed it a natural right. Right or duty, it has been a lively leaven in human affairs ever since.

Even at our distance in time and place, we can still feel the alarm which once filled every reactionary heart. The great Bossuet, for example, in his funeral oration upon the widow of Charles I,

paused to contemplate the evils of Protestantism. "Everyone," said he, "became his own tribunal for the judging of beliefs. . . . We need not be surprised that people lost respect for the king's majesty and the laws, that they became factious, rebellious, and self-willed. You unnerve religion when you alter it, when you take from it a certain gravity which alone can hold the peoples in check."

No wonder that Descartes spent twenty years in the relative safety of Holland, and that the revolutionary content of his *Discourse On Method* remains to this day delicately concealed. As for our Protestant ancestors of the sixteenth century, they were sadly sinful (which is to say, rebellious). Our agnostic ancestors of the eighteenth century were positively Satanic (which is to say, revolutionary). And they don't stay dead!

There were effects yet more melancholy. Impairment of the authoritarian principle not only obliged the treasurers to *prove* where they had previously pronounced, but dragged supernaturalist doctrines down in the common ruin of all. It seems that, as a mere matter of ideology, so soon as private judgment began to be exercised and a scientific method to be employed, the limits of the believable universe shrank within the confines of time and space. For example:

(1) Protestantism had a fine sense that truth is impersonal and beyond the reach of human whim. It did not, however, quite give up the notion that truth is somehow a matter of pronouncement and hence of authority. It held that the authority was in fact God himself, and that God's truth was laid down in a series of infallible sentences contained within the canonical scriptures.

Thus the Bible replaced papal and conciliar utterances as the rule of belief; and certainly its assertions, being of great antiquity, could not be suspected of an eye on current politics. There was, however, some problem what the sentences really asserted, for some of them were expressed in a language long dead, and others in a language learned though alive.

Prayer, when attempted, proved unavailing: it was not proper to require God to translate his own works. Prophetic insight, when claimed, proved wildly anarchic: seventeenth-century London had no less than six hundred sects produced in just this way. In the end there could be no resource except the twin sciences of linguistics and historiography, which alone could decide what a word, a phrase, or a sentence meant fifteen centuries or so before.

But this kind of analysis was precisely that employed for the elucidation of *all* ancient works, profane as well as sacred. Under its impact, the distinctions of sanctity disappeared, and the Bible was found to contain an amount of myth and poetry surprising in a document of infallible truth. Thus the supernatural claims of the



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book produced the scientific criticism of its contents. Divinity, it was discovered, could not make itself plain, unless it too surrendered to the intelligence of man.

(2) The singular perversity with which sacred things imply their opposites appeared again in the doctrines of Spinoza and with a rigor that appalled his contemporaries. The traditional, scholastic definition of God had been that he is a being "possessing all possible attributes." That is to say, he is the one being which can be the subject of all possible sentences; everything that can be said, can be said about him.

Now, if you inquire what entity it is which can be the subject, directly or indirectly, of *all* sentences, you will have to reply, the universe. Consequently, if this is what the term "God" means, then God and the universe are identical, and the orthodox definition of God is seen to contain the heretical implications of pantheism.

The odium visited upon Spinoza for this perfectly valid inference was so great that it lasted two hundred years; and even Diderot, flirting with materialism in the mid-eighteenth century, in a long article in the *Encyclopédie*, mistated and abused the genius of his predecessor.

(3) Consider, lastly, the change of view toward an object which for centuries had been the very seat of miracles, the human "soul." Divine, so it had seemed, in origin, immortal in destiny, distinguishable from all other earthly things by a habit of rationally or even ecstatically contemplating itself, it became, like the rest, a subject for science. Its fall from empyrean heights was such that Locke, in his strict empiricist moments, discerned there only a blank tablet, and Hume thought best to omit it altogether.

A succession of "states," differentiated with fair precision, replaced the deathless substance of the soul; and natural depravity, which had been so supernaturally conditioned, gave way before a simple blameless continuum. The doctrine, by its use of words like "consciousness" and "mind," betrayed the fact that it still retained much medieval lumber; but to the *illuminati* of 1700, it seemed the perfection of science. One cannot mistake the jubilation with which Voltaire spoke of Locke, in the thirteenth of the *Lettres Philosophiques*: "After so many thinkers had made romances about the soul, there came a sage who modestly wrote its history."

And so, as we see, the great movement of thought which to this very day is called "modern" philosophy had a tenor and bent of its own. It turned away from authority and the supernatural. It turned toward method and natural fact. It turned, that is to say, toward acceptance of the universe as science describes it: a world of things and events, not of spirits and powers, a world in which mysteries



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are brief frustrations of inquiry and miracles are nothing at all.

But, strange to say, the great movement paused, at the end of the eighteenth century, in alarm at the unfolding goal. Our sober burghers, our salesmen of commodities, having taken power in Europe, found themselves unable to produce as golden an age as they had promised. And it began to appear that doctrines which had demolished the treasurers of old society might in turn demolish the treasurers of new.

Modern philosophy was a very great shock, and least of all has the bourgeoisie recovered from it.

### PART III

In July, 1850, Baron Julius Jacob von Haynau, *Feldzeugmeister* of the Austrian army, known by nickname as The Butcher, was recalled from Hungary by reason of the zeal with which he vindicated this title upon the followers of Kossuth. In September of the same year, he visited the brewery of Messrs. Barclay and Company in London, "for the purpose," as *Reynolds' Weekly Newspaper* said, "of inspecting the establishment." He entered his name upon the visitors book, and thus news of his presence spread throughout the brewery.

As the Baron passed through one of the lower rooms, a truss of straw, accurately dropped upon his head, gave him his first sense of the feelings of British workmen. The straw was followed by other missiles, and the missiles by the throwers of them, until the Baron and his two companions fled in panic to the street outside. There for a time they fared no better, the Baron being dragged along by his moustache, which, says the newspaper, "afforded ample facilities to his assailants from its excessive length." At last the three escaped into a public house called The George, whence their rescue was effected by "a strong detachment of police."

The Baron was a foreign visitor; what had British laborers to do with him? Well, the case was that, just because they were laborers, they felt an affinity to workingmen everywhere and to all victims of official power. They were a new class within society, they overleaped national boundaries, and they had the peculiar social status that they could not pursue their interests as laborers without at the same time benefiting mankind. "What's good for the working class is good for the country" has been for a century now the quintessence of social ethics.

This group of human beings has been variously titled: "Labor"

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when some flattery is intended, "working class" when it is being merely named. "Proletariat" has a distinctly left-wing flavor, and the users of it show an undue breadth of knowledge. They may perhaps reply that the Roman *proletarius* belonged to a class considered productive of nothing but offspring, and that the noun "proletarian" appeared in English as early as 1658. But one never knows how much safety there is in erudition.

Whatever the choice of language, the nineteenth century belongs to the workingmen as the seventeenth century belongs to the capitalists: it was the time when they grew up and got a philosophy. Here, however, they reversed the comparison. The capitalists began with a single philosophy (Protestantism, or, at any rate, anti-Catholicism) and then proliferated into sects. The working class, however, began with several philosophies and progressed to one. In the early nineteenth century there were Saint-Simon, Owen, Fourier, Comte, Proudhon. After 1848 there was really only Marx.

This, of course, is not to say that Marx has lacked rivals for working-class support. It is to say that the rivals all represent various adaptations of middle-class thinking to proletarian needs. The thinking thus adapted remains middle-class. But Marx regarded the proletariat as a class with a special mission. His entire theory, with its enormous range over economics, sociology, politics, and philosophy, describes (indeed, one might say, celebrates) the class, the mission, and the fulfillment in socialism. A theory aspiring to replace Marxism might claim to do these things much better, but it could not possibly avoid doing these things.

With the consolidation of the new class and the new theory, a new epoch arrived in the relation of thinkers and treasurers. For the theory held that the new class, fulfilling its destiny, would put an end to exploitation and internecine strife. Consequently upon these immense achievements, "man, at last the master of his own form of social organization, becomes at the same time the lord over nature, master of himself—free."\* The reformation of society under proletarian leadership would mean that the once-established treasurers have been replaced, that their successors have taken on temporary and self-abolishing functions, and that no further need exists for concealing the true nature of society. Thinkers, then, are at last freed from bribery and coercion, are restored to their primordial tasks of describing the universe and refining methodology.

This wonder-working millenium, beyond which may well lie yet other goals, is to occur entirely within space and time, without intervention by any gods or demons, and connected with previous history by known, statable, and indeed stated laws. It is to arise out

\* Engels in *Anti-Dühring*.

of the same continuum which in a previous stage exhibited, as we said, "malevolence, murder, and McCarthy." Consequently, the new philosophy of the new class, proposing to mankind redemption "here and now," does not employ the notion of things supernatural. If there is sufficient pie on earth, there need be none in the sky.

Furthermore, we are told, the dues collectors of proletarian society are engaged in preparing the abolition of all dues collecting whatever. The peculiar nature of dues is that they represent the organization's share of a relative scarcity. The members don't have all they want, the organization hasn't all it wants; there isn't enough to go around. But proletarian society, under the guidance of *its* treasurers, aims at producing, not relative scarcity, but absolute abundance. There is to be enough (and to spare) for all of us, including the organization. Thus disappears the peculiar dearth of dues, the fact that they shrink the purchasing power of every member.

Abundance in goods and services is as near to a panacea as anything can be. Crime vanishes before it: why, for example, steal when the desired objects are plentifully at hand? War and hatred vanish before it: why frown or smite when you are perfectly secure? The golden age, we may hope, begets its own sweet discipline, and needs no police or government or state. Authority, with nothing more to do, makes its historical farewell, taking authoritarianism with it. They depart like Talleyrand and Fouché, in Chateaubriand's wonderful phrase: "Vice leaning on the arm of Crime."

But we are getting ahead of our story. While Marx was preparing thunders in his London exile, what had middle-class thinkers to say about their new world, stirred as it then was by the industrial revolution? Well, in England and France, the two "advanced" countries, the industrial capitalist and the industrial worker were the chief new social phenomena. For each of these, middle-class philosophy provided a complete, though separate world-view, both fabricated (as it chanced) from one and the same Lockian tradition.

Now, in this tradition it is held that if you are to know the world, you must experience it directly, that sensations are veridical (you can doubt other things, but you can't doubt *them*), that the world is a congeries of particular things (probably sensations), that classes, systems, and relations generally, are inventions and conveniences of the mind.

It seems clear that there can be no science if all these doctrines are false, but it seems equally clear that there can be no science if all these doctrines are true. "Science depends on curiosity and bad eyes"—so Fontenelle wisely remarked in 1684. Science enables us to "see" what we can't see: the composition of remote stars, the other side of the moon, the structure of microcosms. Out of the raw data which

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our limited and imperfect senses permit, science constructs, if not an undistorted, at any rate a convincing picture of the world. Mere empiricism cannot possibly account for such effects, and its continuing dominance in our part of the world is one of the vexing forms of cultural lag.

Empiricist doctrines, though inadequate to science, do yield a version of society which is highly congenial to entrepreneurs. The doctrine, for example, that classes are mental fictions suffices by itself to read out of existence the Marxian class struggle. Again, the doctrine that individuals are primary and relations secondary exactly expresses the bourgeois hope that contracts won't be too binding, and statute law too limiting, upon the private accumulation of profit. And the reduction of the cosmos to a congeries of sensations brings it well within the reach of shadows, where, in bankruptcy and disappointment, the failing proprietor can conjure out of existence his dreary world.

All these doctrines are now enunciated with their social sources suppressed, annulled, forgotten; yet, a century ago, the effort was made at applying them publicly. These were, in fact, the very doctrines with which Auguste Comte equipped his positivist philosophers to serve as "members of the working class fully trained."\*

Comte had discerned three stages in the history of thought: a primitive one, in which natural events were ascribed to supernatural causes; a "metaphysical" one, in which causation remained, though no longer supernatural; and a "positive" one, in which phenomena are described simply as observed, by correlation and not by cause. This method he proposed for the study of human society. He thus became the founder of modern sociology, and his followers look back to him with more than ordinary gratitude because, though he enjoined them to describe society, he relieved them of the necessity of explaining it.

In these assertions Comte, like Hume and Berkeley, was mildly heterodox, but he had a religion. In fact, he invented it. The object of worship was to be humanity, and the calendar of saints was to be largely revised so as to include such celebrities as Julius Caesar, Saint Paul, and Charlemagne—but not (Comte being anti-Bonapartist) Napoleon. This religion made some converts, and I myself have seen the tricolor ribbons of three humanist churches decorating Comte's grave. But when all the benefits have been detailed of paying weekly homage to an ideal, I think it must have proved insuperably difficult

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\* Comte's language, in the *System of Positive Polity*, was this: "... the philosopher is, under certain aspects, a member of the working class fully trained; while the working man is in many respects a philosopher without the training."

to worship Julius Caesar. The Romans, to be sure, did it, but they possessed his spoils as well as his *Commentaries*. Comte had deemed *some* religion necessary, on the ground that the heart rules the head. In this he was less shrewd than his contemporary Fourier, who held that the stomach rules both.

Equipped with a religion which had neither mystery nor revelation, and with the enlightened correlatives which had replaced cause, the Comtian philosophers were to preside over the welfare of their fellow men. In particular, they were to represent the working class in its dealings with employers, whom they would infallibly persuade by simply expounding the laws of sociology.\* The vision breaks suddenly of a little group of devoted Lockian sensationalists face to face with negotiators from United States Steel. Let the uncharitable vision fade! It suffices that Comte knew that there was a working class, that philosophers properly belonged to it, and that they might even lead it. Compared with this grand idea, *our* shrunken notion of the task of philosophy belongs to an epoch before Comte and perhaps even before Locke himself.

If, through Comte, empiricism directly addressed the working class, then, through the Utilitarians, empiricism directly addressed the bourgeoisie; and in this version it particularly served the new industrialists, whose rise to political power was consolidated by three successive reforms of the suffrage.

By the simplest of postulates—that men have only two motives: to get pleasure and avoid pain—the Utilitarians proposed to elucidate the whole range of human activity, from economics to politics to ethics. Called by its adversaries a “pig’s philosophy” (which, to tell the truth, it did rather resemble), utilitarianism held that workers work because they get more pleasure from their wages than pain from their labor, that investors invest because they get more pleasure from the interest on their money than they get pain from not spending the money, that criminals will be deterred if punishment brings them more pain than the crimes bring pleasure, that “quantity of pleasure being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry.”\*\*

Now, since pleasant things and good things are identical, and since all men by nature seek pleasant things, it follows that all men by nature seek good things. Their angelic motivation seems assured. Moreover, since workers get more pleasure from working than from

\* “Both parties,” said Comte, speaking of employers and laborers, “will look to this philosophic authority as a supreme court of arbitration. . . . True spiritual power confines itself to giving counsel; it never commands.”

\*\* This is Bentham’s celebrated dictum and one of the most resolute sacrifices ever made to logical consistency. Pushpin, it is agreeable to note, was a child’s game dating back to the sixteenth century.

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not working, and since investors get more pleasure from investing than from not investing, it seems that the general social happiness is also assured. A new Leibniz might proclaim once more that this is the best of all possible worlds.

But most people find from their experience that this is not the best world possible, unless the possibilities have been sadly limited at the origin. Furthermore the identification of pleasure and goodness has long been troublesome. It even troubled the most eminent of the Utilitarians, John Stuart Mill, the son of Bentham's warmest advocate. A man of fastidious tastes and lofty intellect, Mill preferred those pleasures which are usually described as "mental," and deemed them better for mankind than any quantity of other delights. "It is better," he wrote in a famous passage, "to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."<sup>\*</sup>

As between the dissatisfied man and the satisfied pig, if pleasure is the standard, the pig's condition is clearly preferable. Mill's lower rating of the pig therefore amounts to a denial that pleasure is the standard. So far he was perfectly right; but so far, also, he was no longer a utilitarian. Such are the woes of learning from a father, at one and the same time, erroneous doctrines *and* the principles of rational discourse.

Mill is the better humanist, but Bentham, it is fair to say, had meant to be humane. He had advocated universal suffrage, by which he meant one vote for every person, excepting (it was his own proviso) women, children, and lunatics. In 1819 the barring of "females" did not seem ludicrous; and, on the contrary, the enfranchisement of all sorts and conditions of men seemed revolutionary indeed. Nevertheless, Philosophical Radicalism (for so the Benthamites called it) was radical only toward the gentry; toward the masses it was philosophical.

And so, in its inheritors, it has remained. As an adaptation of workers' hopes to capitalist realities, it has become the ideology of every "safe" labor leader, and it has successfully divided all socialist movements, rather strangely, into a Right and a Left. There is still grandeur in its sincerity. But when it is insincere, when it enables legislators to vote for concentration camps on behalf of freedom of thought, its piousness is loathsome. For on these occasions, all too familiar indeed, it values dissent except on crucial questions, and welcomes criticism unless intended seriously. One may say of it what Lytton Strachey said of Macaulay's prose style, that it was one of the most remarkable products of the industrial revolution.

Empiricism frowns on system-building, although it is, I suppose,

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<sup>\*</sup> *Utilitarianism*, Chapter II.

a system itself. Empiricism likes the world to be loose and relaxed, full of chance and opportunity, pliable to human wish. It distrusts order in the way that businessmen distrust government regulation—that is to say, as a restraint upon initiative.

Nevertheless, in Europe at any rate, bourgeois philosophy had always to deal with feudal theory, which was (and is) an elaborately detailed system. No doubt one can *logically* attack a system by asserting that no systems are possible. There remains, however, a deep human belief that the world is in some manner *one* thing, and that a true description of it would, if complete, be one thing also.

This hunger after wholeness, the satisfaction of which puts us in some measure of peace with the world, had to draw upon a different resource within bourgeois philosophy—the tradition of the great systematizers. Spinoza and Leibniz had established this tradition in “modern” times; Kant had tried to draw empiricism into it, rather unsuccessfully; and the next German Idealists threw empiricism out again with rash, romantic zeal. It remained for Hegel to display the universe as a single Absolute Idea, and truth as “a bacchanalia in which not a soul is sober.”

Even in empiricism there is a tendency to resolve things into their attributes, and this comes from taking sensations as the primary reality. Grammatically considered, things are subjects, and attributes are predicates: they are what you ascribe to things or say about things. Now, it happens that predicates fall into several types; that is to say, in talking about things, you sometimes talk quantitatively, sometimes qualitatively, and sometimes in terms of relations (for example, “My house is to the north of yours”). If you care to think of the universe as fundamentally composed of these main types of predicates, and if you are willing to call these types “categories,” then you have got the essence and even the terminology of Hegel’s doctrine. But, in order to do this, you have to consider things as secondary and what is said about them as primary; and Marx called this standing on your head.

Now, the types of predicates are always just what they are, and the predicates themselves always mean just what they mean; and, if *they* constitute the stuff of the universe, then the universe is basically fixed and immutable. This was, as a matter of fact, Hegel’s assertion. The century-long influence of his theory upon England and America shows with what solid satisfaction the new society contemplated itself.

But Hegel had set within his universe a system of relations far too lively for the intended calm. The categories, he held, bore to one another the relation of opposites, each pair being united by possession of a common meaning and yet sundered at the same time by

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contrariety. The notion was, no doubt, that in a world of concepts the opposites would lie frozen and the dialectic be stilled.

Suppose, however, that all this is turned around, that time is let flow again and *things* are made real. Then dialectic walks the earth with giant strides, tumbling mountains and societies, cracking atoms, and showing how it is that matter and energy, those ancient opposites, are one. Then Hegel finds himself, all unwitting, the father of Marx; and, just as the employer "created" the laborer, so the most comprehensive of bourgeois philosophies created for the proletariat, by gift and by negation, a new understanding of the world.

(To be continued)

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*Have you ever paused to take notice that those who are so profoundly interested in having you lay up treasures in heaven have swiped about all the treasures on earth?*

*Man is the only animal that constructs a cage for his neighbor and puts him in it.*

*Laws in the aggregate are largely to keep the people in subjection to their masters.*

*Economic slavery is at the foundation of every other slavery of body, mind and soul.*

—Eugene V. Debs

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*The student of the evolution of freedom . . . says, When you see a cause against which all the powers of law, Church, culture and wealth are united, there is a cause worth looking into.*

—Henry Demarest Lloyd

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*The simple fact is that the kind of society that cherishes academic freedom is the kind that gets the best teachers and scholars and students, and the kind that tries to control what teachers may teach or students learn is the kind that ends up with mediocre teachers and mediocre students.*

—Henry Steele Commager, *Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent*



## WORLD EVENTS

*By Scott Nearing*

### Truth and Fancy

Repeatedly, in our analyses of world events, we have called attention to the exaggerations, inaccuracies, misinterpretations, misrepresentations, and deliberate falsifications of State Department utterances under the administrative leadership of the present Secretary. At times we felt that we were wasting paper and ink, but during recent weeks we have gained the support of one of the most strategically-placed newsmen in the country—James Reston of the *New York Times*.

Reston wrote from Washington in the *Times* of September 16: "There has been a growing tendency in Washington since the war for the government to put out not what it knows to be true, but what it wants people to believe is true. This has been increasingly apparent in the field of foreign affairs."

Mr. Reston illustrated his point with the State Department's public statement following the agreement to establish diplomatic relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union.

The State Department release, prepared by the Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs, the Under Secretary of State, and the Acting Secretary gave the impression that it "was pleased with the results of the Adenauer mission. . . . This statement," Reston continued, "bore almost no resemblance to the analysis of the Moscow-Bonn talks cabled to the State Department by the United States Embassy in Moscow. It served a useful propaganda purpose in West Germany by backing up the German Chancellor, but it gave the American public a wholly inaccurate impression of what the State Department really felt and thought."

"This sort of thing has been going on for quite a while," Reston added. Increasingly, State Department spokesmen put out propaganda and call it news. In support of this contention, he cited misrepresentations of fact dealing with the Bandung Conference, Soviet-Yugoslav negotiations, and the summit Conference in Geneva.

Two days later (*New York Times*, September 18), Reston wrote that "no number of official smiles or misleading communiques out of Washington" can alter the fact that "the Communist peace offensive is making progress in both Europe and Asia. . . . Any objective and

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well-informed person who makes a careful analysis of the results of the four great international conferences of the last six months—at Bandung, Belgrade, Geneva, and last week's Soviet-German conference in Moscow—will be appalled if he compares them with the general impression created by United States official statements and United States news reports at the time of those conferences."

*U.S. News & World Report* of September 23 backs up Reston's estimate: "Don't be misled by all the sweetness and light over the new contacts between Soviet Russia and Germany. Behind the public expressions of pleasure by top officials in the West, there is *deep concern*." (P. 65, italics in the original.)

Additional evidence in support of Reston's thesis comes from a wholly different quarter. At 8 a.m. Sunday, September 24, White House Acting Press Secretary Murray Snyder summoned newsmen to a conference at Lowry Air Force Base, the President's vacation headquarters, and announced that President Eisenhower had suffered a digestive upset during the night. Four hours later, quoting a noon-time report from Major General Howard M. Snyder, White House physician, the Press Secretary said that the President's condition was not serious; he was merely suffering from a common form of indigestion. At 6:45 p.m., Mr. Snyder read a bulletin from the President's doctor: "General Snyder informed me that the President had a mild indigestion yesterday evening. He had the first symptoms of an occlusion or thrombosis at 2:45 a.m." That was sixteen hours earlier!

Can we believe what we read in the press and hear over the air? Obviously not. Are the oligarchs misleading us? Quite certainly they are. This is not a case of Truth versus Fancy, but of Truth versus downright misrepresentation, or, in the language of the street, lying, at the summit of what should be a self-respecting and responsible government.

### A Political Free-Enterpriser Admonishes the Hired Hands

Greece and Turkey were reminded of their "free world" status in letters of admonition sent to their Prime Ministers by Secretary of State Dulles on September 18, 1955. Greek demands that Britain turn the Island of Cyprus over to them on the ground that four-fifths of the Cyprians are Greeks, and Britain's energetic refusal to surrender empire property (backed by Turkey, because a fifth of the Cyprians are Turkish) had led to tension and violence. Since 1947, both Greece and Turkey have been getting extensive United States economic and military aid.

Secretary Dulles was emphatic, as becomes a free-enterpriser nettled by quarrels among the help:

I have followed with concern the dangerous deterioration of Greek-Turkish relations caused by the Cyprus question. Regardless of the causes of this disagreement . . . I believe that the unity of the North Atlantic Community, which is the basis of our common security, must be restored without delay. . . .

Since 1947 the United States has made very considerable efforts to assist Greece and Turkey to maintain their freedom and to achieve greater social and economic progress . . . [because] we feel that the partnership of Greece and Turkey constitutes a strong bulwark of the free world in a crucial area . . . I am confident that the spirit of close cooperation that Greece and Turkey have so often demonstrated in the past as fellow members of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Balkan alliance will enable you to transcend immediate differences in the interests of free world unity. (*New York Times*, September 19, 1955.)

Secretary Dulles wants both his penny and his cake when he insists that members of the "free world" toe the mark at his behest. The Greek and Turkish Governments are either hired hands who do the bidding of their paymaster or else they are free. The essence of freedom is the ability to make and implement choices, unrestrained, unrestricted, and uncoerced. Traditionally, national independence and sovereignty have implied the right to name enemies and declare war. If Greece and Turkey are free, they will identify, protect, and promote their interests as they see them. If they are vassals and mercenaries on Washington's payroll, they must stop prating about freedom and do as they are told.

### Double Standard

History is filled with examples of double standards—one for friends, another for enemies; one for masters, another for slaves.

United States spokesmen boast that this country has turned its back on such primitivism by establishing a government of principles, rather than a dictatorship by men, to uphold equal justice under law.

These are bold words. If they were true ones, the community which professes them would occupy an enviable position in the annals of political achievement. It is one thing to broadcast creeds, or to carve letters in granite facades. It is quite another matter to practice what we profess and preach.

State Department spokesmen have been insisting that the Chinese Peoples Government in Peking must give up any intention of using armed force in dealing with the problem of Formosa, which the Chinese regard as a "domestic" problem. But when the question was raised of allowing representatives of Cyprus and the French possessions in North Africa to present their case to the United Nations,

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United States representatives joined with those from Britain and France in refusing the requests on the ground that Cyprus is "British" and North Africa is "French." Meanwhile, the London and Paris Governments are using extreme violence in their attempts to keep their unruly vassals in line.

On September 22, 1955, Secretary Dulles made a strong plea for peace before the Assembly of the United Nations. Two days before, on September 20, the regime of President Juan D. Peron was overthrown by a violent rebellion in which the Argentinian Navy seems to have played the leading role. The same papers which reported Peron's downfall carried Washington hints that as soon as the new government in Buenos Aires held control of the country, it would be given diplomatic recognition by Washington. During the next 48 hours, the government of the Argentine rebels, established by armed force used against duly constituted public authority, was recognized by the State Department.

Such practices are in accord with State Department policy. It is only a year since similar procedures were followed in the case of rebel governments in Guatemala and in Iran.

How can the Secretary of State condemn the use of violence one day and reward it the next, unless he speaks for a government which operates, not in terms of principle, but in terms of privilege and partisanship, denouncing and condemning the "wrong" people and backing the "right" ones?

### The Dulles-Lodge Formula

Those who have difficulty in following the logic of Secretary Dulles and Ambassador Lodge in their pronouncements on world affairs, should note the fallacies which underlie their reasoning.

*First fallacy:* The United States is always right.

*Second fallacy:* Governments which differ with or oppose Washington are manifestly in the wrong.

*False conclusion:* It is the duty of Washington to use the means at its disposal, including military retaliation, to set the erring nations on the true path, and, by so doing, to promote freedom and peace in the world.

### The American Decade

Readers who have followed our argument up to this point will be inclined to agree with Kenneth Leslie's lead editorial (*New Christian*, August-September, 1955, 95 Argyle Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia) headed "The American Decade." "The American Century has shrunk to a decade," Leslie writes. The 1945-1955 decade offered Washington one opportunity after another to play "the self-assumed

role of world leader. . . . What they have succeeded in doing has been to identify themselves thoroughly with the cause of world reaction." One reason for this failure to lead is that "the interests seeking the protection of this new America are composed of the veritable garbage of history, all those elements supposed to have been discarded after the French and American revolutions, feudal barons dressed in modern clothes, obscurist bishops with patched-up theologies, generals in- and out-of-uniform with new salutes and slogans, trying to push themselves into the picture in front of the cartel money octopus, which is delighted to have them hide his unlovely countenance."

Leslie is saying, in general, what we have spelled out in detail. Washington's assumptions are fallacious, its propaganda is mendacious. It has taken a decade, not a century, to expose the fallacies and illuminate the mendacities.

### An Omission and an Apology

Last month's *World Events*, which included some representative notes on doings in the "free world," omitted one without which the picture of "free worldliness" is incomplete.

The *New Statesman and Nation* (London) of September 10, 1955, devotes its lead article to "The Death of Kamau Kachina." "Kamau was a Kikuyu who died recently," the *New Statesman* writes. "The manner of his death was objectively summarized by a European magistrate Mr. A. C. Harrison, last week at Nyeri in Kenya. Kamau died in the hands of the British police. 'No effort,' said the magistrate, 'was spared to force him to admit his guilt. He was flogged, kicked, handcuffed with his arms between his legs and fastened behind his neck, made to eat earth, pushed into a river, denied food for a period, and was left out at least two nights tied to a pole in a shed, not surrounded by walls, with only a roof overhead, and wearing merely a blanket to keep out the cold.' Although two days before his death he had been reduced to a state in which he could no longer stand, no doctor was called. He was given no trial.'"

Thus the "free world" continues to demonstrate, to the "slaves" behind the Iron Curtain, the superior advantages enjoyed by those who live in freedom, with equal justice under the law.

### First Prize

Only in very special cases involving diplomatic missions or business dealings are citizens of the United States permitted to visit the Soviet Union. Standard passports are stamped "Not good for travel in the Soviet Union." Within the month, a well-known American writer, invited to attend a cultural conference in Peking and to read a

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paper on United States literature, was refused a passport. Just about the least popular thing a United States citizen can do is to display an interest in or knowledge about a country across the Iron Curtain. "There is no accounting for tastes," said the bystander as the milkmaid kissed the cow. Practices which are prohibited in one part of the world are encouraged in another.

A good example of such different approaches appears on page 241 of the *New Statesman and Nation* for August 27, 1955, in the form of a double column advertisement

**YOU MAY VISIT RUSSIA FREE!** as a guest of the Soviet Government. A special invitation enables the *News Chronicle* to make this exciting and genuine offer to its readers. Those selected to go will accompany a British agricultural delegation leaving Britain towards the end of September. But their tour will by no means be confined to agricultural centres. It will last two weeks. There will also be substantial cash awards to those travelling to Russia. Here is an opportunity to enjoy a rare experience of absorbing interest at no personal cost to yourself. Details of how to enter the straightforward competition for which the visits to Russia and cash awards are prizes are appearing exclusively in the *News Chronicle*.

While newspapers in the United States are smearing and denouncing the Soviet Union, a leading London paper is offering a free trip to the Soviet Union as a First Prize in a contest designed to boost circulation.

### A New Lead

Finnish spokesmen, visiting Moscow to discuss the renewal of the 1948 Finnish-Soviet treaty of friendship, were told on September 27, 1955, that the Soviet Union was prepared to surrender the Porkkala naval base built by the USSR on a 150 square mile tract twenty miles southwest of Finland's capital of Helsinki. Porkkala was leased by Finland to the Soviet Union in 1944 for fifty years. The treaty still has nearly forty years to run.

Soviet spokesmen, who explained the move as a peacetime adjustment of a war-created emergency step, suggested that similar adjustments might be made by other nations having military installations on foreign soil.

This initiative of the Soviet Union forces into the field of international practical politics the whole question of military bases abroad. Do they make for peace and friendship? Or are they sources of misunderstanding, antagonism, tension, bitterness, hatred, and eventually of war?

The United States is reported to have more military bases on foreign soil than any other nation.

(continued from inside front cover)

that this meeting will draw a full house, so if you want to be sure of getting a seat you had better get there early.

While on the subject of meetings, we would like to call to the attention of our readers in the Chicago area a meeting on the Braden case to be held on November 11th at 8:15 p.m. in Curtis Hall, 410 South Michigan, tenth floor. The speaker of the evening will be Carl Braden himself, the sponsor the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, the Chairman Harvey O'Connor, and the admission \$1.

And while we're on the subject of Harvey O'Connor, we are delighted to announce that his new book *The Empire of Oil* which is being published by Monthly Review Press will be off the press on November 4th. Between then and publication date, November 28th, you can get *The Empire of Oil* at the special pre-publication price of \$3.50. After that we are precluded by our contract with Citadel Press, which will distribute the book to bookstores, from selling it at less than the list price of \$5. A word to the wise. . . .

Also on Harvey O'Connor: his trial for contempt of the Senate, brought on by refusal to answer impertinent questions of the old McCarthy Committee, was held without a jury before Judge McGarraghy in Washington early in October. The trial itself was highly interesting (see *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, October 10), but at the time of writing the verdict is not yet in.

Shortly after the O'Connor trial, Judge McGarraghy handed down what may become a historic decision when he granted a defense motion of dismissal in the case of Barrows Dunham, who had refused on Fifth Amendment grounds to tell the Un-American Committee more than his name and address. This is what has come to be known as the "name, rank, and serial number" position—so called because this is the maximum information a prisoner of war is supposed to be obliged to tell his captors—and its vindication would go far towards establishing the right to silence in the face of the inquisition.

The response to the first installment of Barrows Dunham's essay "Thinkers and Treasurers," which appeared in last month's issue, was so enthusiastic that we decided to rush the printing of the remainder and make the whole into an MR pamphlet to be available before Christmas. This issue therefore carries Parts II and III, and next month's will publish the concluding part.

In preparing this memorial issue, we have had the generous assistance of Mr. Albert S. Frampton who is at work on a Debs anthology. He would greatly appreciate hearing from any MR readers who may have letters or documents of value by or concerning Debs, or who may have interesting first-hand stories to tell about Debs. Please write directly to Mr. Frampton at 15 West 44th Street, New York 36, N. Y.

This month's letter of the month comes from Andrew Boyd, veteran trade unionist of Belfast, Ireland, author of the excellent articles on "Nationalism and Labor in Ireland," MR, October and November, 1953. After commending us for foreseeing more than two years ago that McCarthy was vulnerable and might be defeated, "though some people here thought that he was firmly implanted as part of the monopolist setup in the States," Mr. Boyd goes on to say: "No doubt things looked very black when McCarthy was in his heyday. You need not be afraid of retracing your steps to that article in June 1953. That incidentally is something which very few magazines—even those of the Left—can do. I have found in my few years association with MR that anything written by the editors can stand very stern examination after a lapse of time. Is intellectual honesty and sound Marxism the answer?" We hope so.

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